

Britain guarantees Libya a fair trial

LONDON (AFP) — The British government guaranteed Libya Sunday that two of its nationals suspected of carrying out the 1988 Lockerbie bombing would receive a fair trial if extradited to Britain, a spokesman said. In a statement the Foreign Office spokesman said: "We have given the Libyans a series of detailed assurances about a fair trial in Scotland, and (about) the treatment of the two men after they have been surrendered." The statement on the explosion on board a United States Boeing 747 above the Scottish village of Lockerbie which left 270 dead was released through the British Press Association news agency. But the Foreign Office denied a report published in Scotland's Sunday Post newspaper which claimed Britain and Libya had reached a "secret agreement" over the trial of the two men (see page 10). "There is no secret agreement," the spokesman said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

UAE assails Iran over disputed islands

RIYADH (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday criticised Iran over three disputed Gulf islands, saying Tehran had yet to prove its good intentions. "Iran is still repeating its claims of ownership and sovereignty on the Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa islands which belong to the UAE," Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah Al Nuaimi told a meeting of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) foreign ministers in Riyadh (see related story below). The UAE, which hosted failed talks with Iran on the dispute last year, is the current chairman of the GCC, which also groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain. The minister also criticised Tehran for saying the islands were an integral part of Iran and for describing the dispute as a "small side issue." He reiterated a call on Iran to restart peace talks to resolve the dispute "with the islands' full return to the UAE." There had been reports that the UAE minister of state for foreign affairs, Sheikh Humdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan, a son of the UAE's president, was expected to go to Tehran in September to discuss the issue. The GCC has strongly backed the UAE in the dispute, triggering harsh responses by neighbouring Iran.

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Jordan to finalise its agenda after Israel-PLO agreement is formalised

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein said Sunday that Jordan was likely to ratify a draft agenda for its talks with Israel after the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel sign the self-rule agreement they have reached.

The King stressed, however, that the agenda is not a peace agreement with Israel but an "outline" of the topics that need to be discussed.

"(The agenda) has been misinterpreted as an accord. In fact it is an agenda of all topics that have to be discussed in great depth and hopefully the problems that have to be solved," King Hussein told reporters during a joint press conference with Austrian President Thomas Klestil.

King Hussein said Jordan held back the ratification of the agenda until progress was achieved on the Palestinian track of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. "Once we see the Israeli-Palestinian moves materialise in terms of the expected agreement, then we will hear our responsibility towards ourselves, towards the future of our people," the King said.

King Hussein stressed that Jordan was seeking comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which will take time to achieve. "There is much that is important for us to address and attempt to resolve, but in the final analysis, it will take time to work out these problems and we hope this will be done simultaneously with the other Arab parties (involved) and Israel so that we can have comprehensive peace," the King said.

"We have many problems dictated by geography, proximity, occupied territories and other problems that are a challenge to both sides in terms of bringing about peace in the region between us as well as helping in the Palestinian dimension," the King said in response to a question on whether Jordan has any problems with Israel other than the Palestinian issue.

"There is the human element, there are resources, areas that are still under occupation, and the entire structure of peace in the region," he said.

The King reiterated that it was still premature to define the nature of future Jordanian-Palestinian relations, saying the issue will be addressed when the Palestinians are able to freely

exercise their right to choose. Responding to a question on possible confederation between Jordan and a Palestinian entity, the King said: "My answer is very clear... it is illogical to speak of any form of relationship until such time as our Palestinian brethren are in a position to exercise, under conditions of total freedom, their right of choice. We will talk about it then."

King Hussein, who Saturday gave full support to the PLO-Israeli accord as a serious attempt to achieve comprehensive peace, said the agreement offers "a chance and we hope it will be taken since it is the last chance." Asked if he believed extremists pose a threat to the peace process and the Gaza-Jericho agreement, the King said: "There is always a danger" but hoped that people will realise that, once there are tangible results that, "this is the only choice, the best choice for all."

King Hussein said that it was clear yet how Jordan can help in building the infrastructure in Gaza and Jericho once the agreement is implemented, adding that Jordan was discussing the issue with the Palestinians to find out "exactly what they require of us and see what we can do to help in any way we can."



His Majesty King Hussein and Austrian President Thomas Klestil at a joint press conference Sunday (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

Klestil ends visit praising Jordan

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Austrian President Thomas Klestil left Amman Sunday after a two-day visit during which he held talks with His Majesty King Hussein on bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process. Dr. Klestil said his visit to the Kingdom provided the right track of Austria's foreign policy.

Austria chairs the water committee in the multilateral phase of the Arab-Israeli talks and is also involved in energy-related development in the Middle East.

Dr. Klestil said a Middle East peace agreement should be supported by Europe, which should look at the PLO-Israeli agreement from economic and financial as well as political perspectives.

"I think a peace agreement will deserve all the support, economic and financial, that can be given (by Europe)," he said.

Asked about Jordanian-Austrian relations after peace is achieved in the Middle East, Dr. Klestil said: "Nothing will change other than Jordan will play an even more important role in the region and we have more reasons to look into strengthening our bilateral relations."

Earlier in the day, King Hussein and President Klestil held a round of official talks which was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Royal Court Chief Khaled Karaki and other officials.

President Klestil laid a wreath at the tomb of King Abdullah. President Klestil, who accepted an invitation extended by King Hussein to pay a state visit to Jordan, was given an official farewell ceremony and was seen off at the airport by King Hussein, Prince Hassan, Dr. Majali, Dr. Karaki and other officials.

He said Austria was not asked to play any role in the secret talks but would do so in the future if invited by all the concerned parties.

Dr. Klestil said Austria would continue to support the peace process and "was happy to see that developments confirm the right track of Austria's foreign policy."

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He said his country was not involved in the secret Palestinian-Israeli talks that resulted in the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

The timing of his visit "is no indication that we were involved in the secret talks," he told the press

King and Queen leave for London

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein, Middle East peace process, notably the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on autonomy. The King and Queen were seen off from Amman airport by Royal family members and senior officials.

A Royal Palace spokesman said Saturday the King had called off a visit to the Far East later this month because of the latest developments in the

Arafat seeks Syrian and Arab endorsement of self-rule deal

Combined agency dispatches

DAMASCUS — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat began talks on Sunday expected to centre on a proposed Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

Mr. Arafat is on a mission to persuade Mr. Assad to support the accord but Palestinian opposition sources said his task would not be easy and the Syrians would probably use "harsh words."

Syria has shown signs it does not like the agreement.

The official news agency SANA said the talks were attended by Syrian Vice-President Abdul Hafiz Khaddam and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa.

Among those attending from the Palestinian side were head of the PLO's Political Department Farouk Kaddoumi and head of the Information Department Yasser Abed Rabbo, SANA added.

Before beginning talks with Mr. Assad, Mr. Arafat told reporters in Damascus: "I'm happy to be here in these crucial and destiny-making circumstances... to consult with President Assad and listen to his good advice."

Mr. Arafat first went to Cairo,

where he met with Foreign Minister Amr Musa at the airport and spoke to President Hafez Al Assad by telephone during a brief refuelling stopover.

"We're on the verge of finalising this agreement," Mr. Arafat told reporters in Cairo.

But he said, without elaboration, that there "are still some obstacles that stand in the way" of the PLO and Israel formally recognising each other, a key issue before the plan can be signed.

Egypt, which signed its own peace treaty with Israel in 1979, has blessed the accord, which provides for Palestinian autonomy in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Cairo reportedly has been trying to mediate between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Assad long-time adversaries in the Middle East's Byzantine politics.

Mr. Arafat said he plans to visit other Arab capitals. He did not name them, but Palestinian sources said he will fly to the Gulf from Damascus. In recent days he has visited Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt and Jordan.

Syria, a key player in the 22-month-old U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace talks, has not officially

commented on the Gaza-Jericho plan.

But its state-run media have castigated Mr. Arafat for failing to coordinate beforehand with his Arab partners in the peace process — Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Damascus opposes any bilateral Arab-Israeli deal, insisting on a comprehensive settlement by all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Arafat's go-it-alone strategy in his secret negotiations with the Israelis has angered Mr. Assad.

Syria's government-run Al Baath daily Sunday demanded "higher Arab coordination... so that the Arab position is unified. Singling out each part will never serve the Arab cause, only split it up."

Syrian backing is crucial to get the PLO's ruling body to give Mr. Arafat the green light to sign the accord with Israel.

The most vehement opposition to the self-rule accord has come from Damascus-based Palestinian factions.

Mr. Arafat, speaking at Cairo airport on the way to Damascus, described Arab reaction to the agreement as positive but he declined to be drawn on Syria's (Continued on page 3)

Baghdad cabinet reshuffled

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Sunday replaced his prime minister and appointed new oil and industry ministers, the Iraqi News Agency reported. The move appeared designed to push the country's economic reconstruction.

Ahmad Hussein Al Khudayar, the current finance minister, was appointed prime minister to replace Mohammad Hamza Al Zubeidi who had held the job for two years.

The cabinet reshuffle was intended to "give a new momentum to Iraq's reconstruction following the Gulf crisis," said Adel Ibrahim, the spokesman for the Iraqi embassy in Amman.

Tareq Aziz stayed on as deputy premier, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

Mr. Aziz usually handles Baghdad's efforts to obtain the lifting of economic sanctions which the United Nations has imposed since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

INA, which did not give a complete list of the cabinet reshuffle, said Safa Hadi Jawad replaced Osama Abdul Razak Al Hiti as oil minister, while General Hussein Kamel Hassan, advisor to the president, was named minister of industry and minerals.

Latif Nassif Jassem, a former information minister, was designated minister of labour and social affairs, Beshir Alwan Hamdani minister of agriculture, Nizar Jumaa Ali Al Kassir minister of irrigation, Ahmad Mortada Ahmad Khalil minister of transport and communications, Abdul Monem Ahmad minister of religious affairs, and Abdul Wahab Omar Mirza Al Atrushi minister of state.

The new foreign minister was not identified on the list. It had been held by Mohammad Said Al Sahaf. Mr. Khudayar once served as foreign minister in 1991 and 1992.

A second decree appointed Abdul Sattar Ahmad Al Mami as advisor to President Saddam, and ex-oil minister Hiti, Abdul Wahab Mahmoud Abdullah Al Sabagh, Abdullah Fadel Abbas and Amir Hammoud Al Sadi as advisors at the presidential office.

A third decree appointed Tahir Mohammad Hassan, an advisor at the presidential office, as mayor of Baghdad.

A senior Jordan-based Western diplomat said the reshuffle underlined "the economic crunch resulting from international sanctions."

Date for self-rule signing uncertain

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel will probably not be able to sign their breakthrough peace agreement on Sept. 13 because PLO institutions will need up to a month to approve it, a Palestinian source said on Sunday.

The United States had offered Monday, Sept. 13, as a possible date for a signing ceremony — the last day Israeli officials could attend an event in Washington and still get home for Jewish new year celebrations beginning on Wednesday.

The source said the PLO and Israel would reach agreement this week on recognising each other, which they have to do before they can publicly sign their outline agreement on Palestinian self-rule.

But he said PLO institutions could take up to a month to approve the document. "We need the time for our own approvals from our own organisations," he said. Asked if the deal could still be signed a week on Monday, he said: "I don't think so... the Executive Committee is meeting Thursday, after that the Central Council. It is going to take some time."

Israel's Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich also said he was not certain that an Israeli-Palestinian agreement would be signed here Sept. 13.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to peace talks here, also said it was premature to speak of Sept. 13 as a date for signing an agreement but said it was seen as a target date.

"The certainty of a signature on the 13th has yet to be established," said Mr. Rabinovich. "It is a bit early to decide on the 13th but we are going to use it as a target date," said Dr. Ashrawi.

The coordinator of the Palestinian delegation to the Mideast peace talks in Washington, Nabil Shaath, said Saturday that the United States had told Russia, co-sponsor of the peace talks, it was ready to host a signing ceremony on Sept. 13.

The White House has not confirmed the offer, and the State Department's coordinator Dennis Ross said Saturday evening on CBS that there were still problems to resolve and could not confirm a signing ceremony would be held on Sept. 13.

The PLO Executive Commit-

tee will meet in Tunis Wednesday to review the agreement with Israel, a member of the committee said.

Abdullah Hurani told AFP in Amman that he would take part in the meeting set for Wednesday in the Tunisian capital, where the PLO has its headquarters.

Earlier in Tunis, a Palestinian official said the meeting of the PLO inner circle would be followed by a wider session of the Palestine Central Council, which has around 100 members.

The two bodies have to endorse the accord on autonomy. On Saturday, the main PLO group, Patah, approved the accord following a total of 15 hours of heated debate chaired by Mr. Arafat.

Israeli cabinet ministers said they hoped the agreement with the PLO together with a separate agreement on mutual recognition could be signed on Sept. 13.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat have said there is no going back on the self-rule deal.

PLO and Israeli officials have already initiated a text of the self-rule agreement but Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said on Sunday they were still working out the final details of mutual recognition.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein said: "The declaration of principles is independent of the mutual recognition. So there is no reason why we should not go ahead and sign the 'Gaza and Jericho' first agreement Monday in Washington."

"Let's hope that the two agreements will be signed at the same time," he told reporters.

The Tel Aviv stock exchange, opened sharply higher on Sunday with investors hopeful the agreements were near.

"No one has an alternative. It is impossible to go back. There is no going back," Mr. Peres told Israel Radio before briefing the cabinet on Sunday.

On Saturday Mr. Arafat, in his first exclusive interview with Israel Television, called the process irreversible.

"The first steps of peace have begun," he said. "From our side, there is definitely no backing up."

Health Minister Chaim Ramon said: "The cabinet discussed the contents of a unilateral declaration by the Palestinians that they recognise Israel. If they agree to

Arab Gulf states back Palestinian autonomy accord

RIYADH (Agencies) — Six Arab Gulf states announced Sunday that they supported the Israeli-Palestinian accord for limited Palestinian autonomy.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said in a statement it "welcomed the draft accord as a first step on the path to a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian cause and Arab-Israeli conflict."

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain and Oman overcame earlier doubts about the accord after prodding by Washington, the key sponsor of the Middle East peace talks, a GCC source said.

Diplomats said the pledge of support could lead to crucial financial backing for Palestinian autonomy.

The oil-rich states are expected to participate in a U.S. plan to boost the autonomy accord by providing the Israeli-occupied territories with \$590 million in international economic aid.

The Gulf cut off aid to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) after accusing it of supporting Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

GCC Chairman Fahem Al Qasbi said in an opening speech that he hoped to see the "latest developments in the peace process lead to the attainment of Arab and Palestinian rights."

The only means to recover these rights as well as the occupied Arab territories was to take a United Arab stand, he said.

Sheikh Qasbi told AFP earlier that the GCC states "support

any solution to the crisis in the Middle East" that leads to an Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab land in line with U.N. resolutions.

But the autonomy deal "remains confusing for GCC countries," he said.

"Apart from the question of material aid, the GCC states are afraid they may be asked to take in more than 600,000 Palestinians... because the draft accord ignores the fate of refugees from 1948," a GCC official said.

Diplomats said GCC approval of the accord was crucial for the PLO as it was counting on the Gulf states to provide an estimated \$100 million in financial aid.

In the semi-official UAE newspaper Al Ittibad, Ahmad Kalash, information chief at the PLO

office in Abu Dhabi, said Sunday that the accord must be approved by all Arab states before it is signed.

"All Arabs have suffered and sacrificed their blood, money and stability of their people to pay the bill of the Palestinian cause," he said.

"They have all fought the battle for Palestine since early this century... no one can deprive them of the right to have a say in all that concerns the Palestinian cause."

State-supported media in the Gulf states have given a guarded welcome to the autonomy deal.

Some newspapers known for their Arab nationalist zeal have questioned it and Islamic fundamentalists in the region, who have few public platforms despite their relative influence, were

widely believed to oppose the accord, diplomats said.

One nationalist paper, Al Khaleej of Sharjah, described the proposed agreement on Sunday as a "dangerous adventure that caused 'regret, sorrow and disgust' and said it raised the spectre of an inter-Arab civil war."

"Like their Palestinian equivalents who strongly oppose the deal, radical fundamentalists here (in the Gulf) see any deal with Israel as verging on apostasy," one diplomat said.

He noted that fundamentalist opposition focused mainly on the status of Jerusalem.

Diplomats said although the GCC ministers may offer political support for the peace moves, their willingness or ability to offer economic support appeared limited.

U.S. moves towards recognising PLO

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton's administration will approach Congress soon on reopening talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and a chief aide to Chairman Yasser Arafat said Friday there already are assurances of U.S. recognition.

Administration officials told the Associated Press the point of consulting Congress is to make certain reopening of talks with the PLO after more than three years would not conflict with any standing legal restrictions.

For instance, a congressional amendment prohibits the executive branch from using government funds to hold talks with the PLO. The restrictions were based on a determination the PLO sponsored "terrorism" and targeted Israelis and Americans.

That view is fast-changing now that Israel has concluded lengthy secret negotiations with the PLO and is on the verge of turning over Gaza and the West Bank to Palestinian administration and recognising the PLO as a legitimate organisation.

Nabil Shaath, chief political strategist for Mr. Arafat, said in an interview "there are assurances" from the Clinton administration of U.S. recognition.

And a senior U.S. official, in a separate interview, said that a step "seemed self-evident." But first, the United States would resume the dialogue established in December 1988 and suspended in June 1990 after a PLO group attacked Tel Aviv beaches, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

He stressed it was important to consult Congress, where pro-Israel support has always been strong, on "how you change our current policy."

Dr. Shaath, meanwhile, said it was a simple matter, requiring only an executive order, not an act of Congress.

Mr. Christopher hinted last Tuesday at a policy shift. "Obviously, there are developments taking place that we are going to follow very carefully," he said.

Officially, the State Department still considers the PLO an umbrella organisation with elements that promote "terrorism" and others that do not.

Dr. Shaath said Mr. Arafat's job now was to convince the PLO's executive and central committees he "made a good deal" with Israel.

It already had the support of at least 75 per cent of the Palestinians who live on the West Bank in Gaza, he said.

Israel and the PLO, after nearly 30 years of bitter enmity, now are working together to sell their deal to the Israeli and Palestinian public.

Critics in Israel see Mr. Arafat's pending toehold on the West Bank as the first phase in a long-held PLO policy of taking over Israel in phases. Mr. Arafat's critics, meanwhile, contend he has settled for too little from Israel.

Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich said, meanwhile, the declaration establishing Palestinian self-rule would be signed even if terms of mutual recognition are not hammered out.

Mr. Rabinovich said the agreement could be signed late in the month, when Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is in New York for the U.N. General Assembly.

Dr. Shaath said he expected the agreement to be signed at the foreign ministers' level. He said that would mean either Farouk Kaddoumi or Mahmoud Abbas, two senior Arafat aides, signing for the PLO.

Israel and the PLO are still in negotiations "hour-by-hour" on the telephone, Dr. Shaath said, now that the talks in Oslo, Norway, have been concluded.

Since the PLO is not a state, U.S. recognition would not involve an exchange of ambassadors. The U.S. consulate in Jerusalem already is the American contact to Palestinians on the West Bank.

Mr. Christopher is planning calls and letters this weekend to urge Arab and European officials to support the agreement, said a State Department official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In addition, Mr. Christopher's team of Middle East experts planned this weekend to urge Arab and Israeli Middle East negotiators in Washington to keep up the momentum in the other three tracks of peace talks — between Israel and three Arab countries, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

Mr. Rabinovich, at a news conference, said negotiations this week with Syria had made some headway on security concerns but had not "overcome the basic problem."

That is Syria's demand for recovery of the Golan Heights and Israel's demand for a peace treaty.

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Egyptian group urges Jerusalem liberation

CAIRO (R) — A statement purporting to come from Egypt's shadowy fundamentalist group Jihad urged Muslims to target Jerusalem and liberate the city from Israeli rule.

The faxed statement, signed by the information office of Jihad (holy struggle) and sent to an international news organisation on Saturday night, said the Muslim holy sites in Saudi Arabia, the cities of Mecca and Medina, were also under foreign occupation.

It was not possible to obtain independent confirmation that the statement came from Jihad. The group assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981 and now says it is bent on toppling his successor, Hosni Mubarak, to turn Egypt into an Islamic state.

The statement said it was the duty of all Muslims to struggle to liberate Jerusalem, Islam's third holiest site, from the enemies of Islam.

Jihad's chief weapon was the armed struggle, the statement said.

"The most important of our methods is fighting against governments that are apostates from Islam, a method which we consider an obligation on Muslims at this time."

"Our first goal is to set up an Islamic state. A state of the caliphate which will work to... rule by Sharia and liberate the occupied lands of the Muslims and the first of them is Jerusalem," the statement said.

"We do not count Egypt out of this... or the two holy shrines (at Mecca and Medina) where the agents of America, the Saudi family, have allowed them (the Americans) into the land of Islam so that they defile the Arabian Peninsula which the Prophet of God purified."

Egypt has charged 248 militants with trying to reactivate the group, crushed after the Sadat assassination.

A statement which said it was from the group claimed responsibility for the attempted assassination of Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi last month — the bomb attack in central Cairo killed five people.

Saturday's statement said its author was Ayman Al Zawahiri, Jihad's "emir," or leader.

Mr. Zawahiri, wanted by Egyptian police, is a doctor who went to Afghanistan to help the Mujahideen fight the Soviet army. Egyptian security forces think he moves between Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, directing militant operations in Egypt.

Jihad is believed to focus on infiltrating the military as the only force capable of overthrowing Mr. Mubarak. Four of the 248 charged with trying to revive the group have been identified as military personnel and fundamentalist sources say there may be others.

The statement said Jihad had a mission to reform society morally and provide social justice by fair distribution of wealth.

It also said: "There has been a lot of talk recently about our group and its nature."

"We see it as useful to publish a summary of our goals so that people can benefit from them — especially if they have no connection with Islamic movements."

Some people had been detained for questioning in Batnan but gave no details.

A delegation of seven DEP deputies was visiting Batnan last week to investigate the killing of a separatist leader, brother of DEP Vice-Chairman Nesim Kilic.

DEP officials said security forces had detained Nesim Kilic, accompanying the delegation, at Diyarbakir airport on Friday.

Interior Minister Mehmet Gazioglu, who arrived in Batnan on Sunday with Justice Minister Seyfi Oktay, was quoted by Sabah newspaper as blaming the shooting on the PKK.

"According to preliminary information, it was the work of the PKK, which is carrying out such actions to escalate the tension in the region," he told the paper.

But a senior official quoted by Anatolian news agency said the attack bore the hallmarks of the fundamentalist pro-Iranian Hizbollah group, which has feuded with the PKK in recent years.

Kurdish nationalists say the security forces are involved in death squad-style killings attributed to Hizbollah, as part of an undercover war on the PKK. The government denies the claims.

The deputies came under fire in the late afternoon near a pharmacy on a busy street in Batnan, a city of fear where scores of people have died in unsolved shootings this year.

The gunmen — conflicting accounts put their number at between one and four — escaped. Police chief Mehmet Agar said 12 cartridges from a nine-millimetre gun had been recovered.

More than 1,300 people have been killed in the southeast since the collapse on May 24 of a unilateral PKK ceasefire.

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Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday visits the Ministry of Communications and Postal Affairs and is briefed on its activities by Minister Tareq Subeimat (left) and Secretary General Abdullah Al Jazi (Petra photo)

Majali and ministers review transport, communication projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday made an unscheduled visit to the Transport Ministry and attended part of a regular weekly meeting of its planning committee chaired by Minister of Transport Salman Al Tarawneh and attended by senior ministry officials.

Dr. Majali listened to a briefing on air transport and civil aviation services.

He also reviewed with ministry officials draft regulations for the newly formed Higher Council for Transport, the draft was subsequently approved by the committee.

Later, Dr. Majali called at the Ministry of Communication and Postal Affairs where he met with Minister Tareq Subeimat and Abdullah Al Jazi, the ministry's secretary general. The prime minister reaffirmed the government's interest in applying a decentralised system to facilitate matters for public and save people time and expenses.

Aqaba Hotel to be replaced with new 4-star facility

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — To six to nine months, 32-year-old Aqaba Hotel, owned and operated by the Social Security Corporation (SSC), is to be torn down to make way for the construction of a four-star 350-room hotel, according to SSC Director General Mohammad Saleh Al Hourani.

"We are building a modern hotel with 270 double and 70 single rooms, as well as 10 business suites on the same spot as the beach front Aqaba Hotel at a cost of JD 12 million," said Mr. Hourani in a statement to the Jordan Times.

The SSC has already begun preparing designs and blueprints for the new hotel, he added.

Remarking that the new hotel will take three years to complete, Mr. Hourani said the larger facility was needed to cope with the increasing demand for accommodations in the resort city, which, he said, is crowded with visitors during the height of the tourist season.

Lately, Aqaba has witnessed

growing tourism activity with visitors coming from Jordan and abroad, he added.

Mr. Hourani said the new hotel is to be set up on 34 dunums with 237 metres of beach front.

According to Nasser Kawa, owner of the Petra Travel and Tourism Company (Petratours), Aqaba is especially crowded with visitors during public holidays in Jordan and in the spring, winter and autumn.

He told the Jordan Times that there is no doubt that once a Middle East peace agreement is reached the port city and the whole of Jordan will witness greater numbers of tourists coming to the Kingdom.

The Ministry of Tourism expects that tourism in Jordan during 1993 will register a 15 per cent increase over 1992.

Tourism in general, particularly in Aqaba, suffered severely during the Gulf crisis when the industry came to a near standstill in the entire region.

According to ministry estimates, the Kingdom sustained \$230 million in lost tourism business during that crisis.



Aqaba's beaches attract vacationers almost all year round, with peak seasons in August, winter and spring (Staff photo by Aynsley Floyd)

NGOs team up to expand interest-free loan project

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) and the Amman-based Office of the Near East Foundation (NEF) are expanding a project for needy families to receive interest-free loans to help them start income-generating projects.

Munawwar Khreis, director of the GUVS Studies Centre said the GUVS and the NEF have created credit funds to channel loans to the poor, thus contributing to the national effort to eradicate poverty and unemployment.

Needy families can receive up to JD 700 on the condition that they guarantee, to pay back the loan in easy instalments, said Mrs. Khreis.

"This is a way of encouraging needy families to depend on themselves and earn their own living and contribute to the development of their own community," said Mrs. Khreis.

The creation of the funds in different governorates was approved following successful experiments in two rural communities: Bir Haddad in Maan governorate and Thuneibeh in the Irbid region, added Mrs. Khreis.

Altogether JD 10,000 was granted to families in the two regions and 14 small-size projects

Chilean foreign affairs official to arrive for 2 days of talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The under secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Rodrigo Diaz Albornoz will arrive in Amman Saturday (Sept. 11) on a two-day official visit to Jordan and will deliver a message to His Majesty King Hussein from the Chilean president.

Chilean Ambassador to Jordan Nelson Haddad Heresi told the Jordan Times Sunday that the envoy will also meet with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan and Minister of Industry and Trade Bassam Al Saket.

Discussions will cover political, cultural and economic matters with a special focus on the Middle East peace process and ways of bolstering Chilean-Jordanian ties, said the ambassador.

He said that Mr. Albornoz, who will be accompanied on the visit by an official delegation, will also familiarise himself with the political developments in the Middle East and the political pluralism and democratic process in the Kingdom.

Meanwhile the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported Sunday that a Chilean tourist delegation will arrive here on Oct. 6 at the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism.

The delegation, which will be led by the director of the Chilean Tourist Department, will tour archaeological sites and other places of interest, according to a programme prepared by the ministry. The tour will take the group to the ancient Nabatean city of Petra, the Greco-Roman city of Jerash and the Dead Sea among other attractions.

Discussions during the visit, said the ministry, will focus on prospects of organising group visits and bilateral cooperation in tourism, said Petra.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister, Pakistani officials discuss health cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Sunday discussed with two visiting secretaries general of health in the Pakistani Federal and Punjab states, Ahmad Rashid Sedeki and Tareq Haroun, health issues and means of developing health cooperation. The two Pakistani officials will acquire first-hand information about the Quality of Life Project in Jordan, in an attempt to utilise it in their country. The project is being carried out by the Ministry of Health and Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Youth minister returns from Lebanon

AMMAN (Petra) — Youth Minister Abdullah Owaidat Sunday returned home after a five-day visit to Lebanon during which he attended the inauguration of the Arab Youth Festival, to which Jordan, along with other Arab countries, participated. Dr. Owaidat also attended the meetings of the Executive Bureau of the Council of Arab Ministers of Youth and Sports. The three-day meetings focused on means of financing the council's fund and reconstructing sports installations and facilities in Lebanon.

Industry raw materials meeting to begin

AMMAN (Petra) — University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh today (Monday) will open the first international conference on raw materials used in industry. The four-day conference, organised by the Jordan Engineers' Association (JEA), in cooperation with the University of Jordan, seeks to shed light on the importance of using local raw materials in industrial industries and its socio-economic effects on Jordan. It will also discuss the possibility of using local raw materials instead of imported raw material in Jordanian industries. The conference will discuss 33 working papers presented by Jordanian and Arab researchers. The papers deal with a wide range of subjects including the availability and sites of raw materials in Jordan, transfer of technology, raw materials used in construction, case studies, strategies of scientific research and quality control. An exhibition of national industries will be held on the sideline of the conference.

HCST chief, Japanese officials review cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary General of the Higher Council of Science and Technology Hani Al Mulki, who is also President of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), Sunday met with a delegation from the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JICA) and discussed with them scopes of cooperation between the agency and the Jordanian scientific and technical institutions. He thanked the Japanese government for its technical assistance to the RSS. Dr. Mulki noted in particular JICA's contribution to the establishment of the Electronic Services and Training Centre and the Computer Technology and Training Centre, which is designed to serve as a regional training centre. The two sides also discussed means of developing advanced computer training packages.

Trade unions official calls for statistics centre

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Secretary General of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFTJU) Mazen Maaitah Sunday called

for setting up a national statistical information centre on labour. In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Maaitah said such a centre is set to support research and studies on labour and requirements of the labour market and help the parties concerned to formulate the policies regarding vocational and technical education. He noted that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has highlighted the pressing need for such a centre during a recent meeting with labour leaders. Prince Hassan stressed the importance of ensuring the representation of the federation at the Higher Council of Education and the Higher Council for Science and Technology. The Crown Prince also lauded the role played by the federation in solving problems facing local communities and supporting national economy Mr. Maaitah said.

Moroccan culture minister to visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Moroccan Minister of Cultural Affairs Mohammed Allal Si Nasser is expected to arrive here Wednesday on a three-day visit to Jordan for talks with his Jordanian counterpart Minister of Culture Mahmoud Al Samra and senior Jordanian officials on scopes of cultural cooperation and means of enhancing them.

1 killed, 14 injured in road collision

ZARQA (Petra) — One citizen was killed and 14 others were injured Saturday in a collision between a private car and a medium-size coaster bus, according to Zarqa police sources. The sources attributed the accident to speeding.

58,920 cigarette cartons seized

AMMAN (Petra) — Customs Department patrols last month seized 58,920 cartons of smuggled cigarettes in the eastern and central badia regions in addition to Mafrqa, according to Customs Department sources. The sources added that the customs patrols also seized electric appliances and auto spare parts smuggled into the country.

Restoration of Irbid prison begins

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Antiquities Department in Irbid Sunday started restoration works at Irbid's old prison in preparation for turning it into a museum for antiquities and national folklore and offices for the antiquities department staff to replace the rented offices.

Architectural engineers to review construction codes

AMMAN (Petra) — Architectural engineers will meet here on Sept. 22 to discuss construction codes and building spaces, requirements of building for the disabled, building materials, lifts, fire prevention, thermal insulation, illumination and ventilation outlets, and water and sanitary connections.

Lands department collects JD 7.5m in August

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lands and Survey Department reported revenues of JD 7,546,825 in August compared with JD 5,885,000 in the same month last year. Last month's revenues registered an increase of 15 per cent over those of July this year, said the department director Ali Gharaibeh. The revenues are collected in the form of fees for trading in lands and other real estate.

Occupational therapy college to hold awareness workshop

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan College of Occupational Therapy (JCOT) will hold an awareness workshop on Wednesday and Thursday September 8 and 9 at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) in Amman beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A college official said that the workshop will review leaflets, posters, video tapes and illustrations depicting occupational therapy services in order to increase the public's awareness regarding this new rehabilitation profession in Jordan.

Established in 1989, the JCOT

is headed by Her Highness Princess Majda Ra'd and sponsored by the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) as well as the Jordanian Armed Forces. The college is currently situated at Farah Centre of the King Hussein Medical Centre.

The college offers a three-year diploma in occupational therapy and has already graduated two classes. Occupational therapists are employed in the field of rehabilitating handicapped persons by enabling them to become self-reliant.

Date for self-rule signing uncertain

(Continued from page 1)

our demands then we will recognise the PLO.

"There are still problems with the wording."

Israel has agreed to discuss the return of some 200,000 Palestinians displaced in the 1967 war, but the official said it refused PLO calls to include, in a recognition declaration, a right of return for hundreds of thousands more refugees from 1948.

Housing Minister Binyamin

Beo Eliezer said Israel wanted the PLO to agree to five principles:

- The right of Israel to exist in peace and security;
- Support for U.N. resolutions 242 and 338;
- Removal from the PLO covenant of calls to destroy Israel;
- Condemnation and renunciation of "terrorism";
- Referral of all outstanding differences to an Israeli-Palestinian committee.

FOR RENT

Furnished Apartment in Shmeisani

• Three bedrooms, living, reception, dining rooms, two bathrooms, kitchen and balconies.
• Two bedrooms, living-dining room, kitchen and bath, large terraces.
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OWNER LEAVING THE COUNTRY Deluxe Furnished Villa For Rent, Tempting Rent

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Good for diplomatic missions.
Location: Sweifiah by the American embassy road, near Baituna Housing Estate.
Please call the landlord directly, tel. 810980

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Egyptian artist H. Bikaner at the Balqa' Art Gallery in Fuhels.
- ★ Thirty paintings by Amour Onis and Salam Kannan at the Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by artists Mohammad Al Ameri and Ghasan Abu Laban at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ New art gallery, "Darat Al Funun," of the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation. Programme includes the permanent exhibition and the "Chair" exhibition in Jabal Luweibdeh.
- ★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Nadhir Isma'il at Balaadna Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Eshebelia Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre.

FILM

- ★ Film entitled "King Kong" at the American Centre at 6:00 p.m.

SEMINARS & LECTURES

- ★ Lecture entitled: "Political Currents in the Arab World" by Dr. Husni Hanafi, head of the Philosophy Department at the University of Cairo at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation.
- ★ Session entitled "Mining and Quarrying Activities Impact on Environment and Health" at the Kofar Alma' Municipal Council.

JOB VACANCY

An international diversified company has a vacancy for a
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All applicants should:

- Have a degree in marketing from an accredited university.
- Have a minimum of five years experience in market research activities.
- Be familiar with personal computers, especially database and spread sheets.
- Be fluent in English and Arabic, both written and spoken.
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☆☆ Applications should be forwarded to:

**Personnel Department
P.O.Box 93
Amman - Jordan**

and should be clearly marked: Job Ref. "Industrial Investments."
The closing date for receiving applications is October 14, 1993.

All applications will be dealt with confidentiality.

Arafat seeks Arab endorsement of deal

(Continued from page 1)

attitude.

"We harbour feelings of respect and affection for president Hafez Al Assad and will listen to his views on many subjects," he told reporters.

The reception Mr. Arafat received in Damascus suggested that all was not well in relations with Syria.

He was met by Foreign Minister Sharaa rather than Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Syria put him up in the Roudha Palace, where visiting prime ministers normally stay, rather than in the more prestigious guest palace.

Most Arab countries recognise Mr. Arafat as president of Palestine and treat him as a head of state.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, who said Saturday the PLO had damaged the Palestinian cause by not briefing the other Arabs on the agreement, had talks with Mr. Khaddam in Damascus on Sunday, SANA said. It gave no details.

Mr. Arafat has asked to meet opposition leader George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) but PFLP sources said a meeting was very unlikely.

Libya and Iran denounced the PLO-Israeli agreement. Libya

said the only just solution was the old PLO ideal of a single state including both Jews and Arabs.

"Such a deal does not achieve a just and permanent peace, which can only be based on the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state in which Palestinians and Jews live together... without that there will not be peace," the official Libyan news agency JANA said.

In a speech on Sept. 1, Libyan leader Moammar Qadhafi said: "What is going on in Palestine now is not peace."

"The Arab-Israeli confrontation is over Palestine and not the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. The PLO's programme includes Jaffa, Acre and Tel Aviv."

Jordan Times

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Bridge of trust

AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT Thomas Klestil's visit to Jordan came at a crucial juncture in the history of this region and its relations with the rest of the world.

Vienna is no stranger to the Middle East conflict and has relentlessly contributed to regional and international efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Former Austrian leaders Bruno Kreisky and Kurt Waldheim, spared no effort to broker peace between the warring states in the Middle East and offered their country as a venue for many past attempts to bring peace to the area.

In their endeavours for peace, Austria and its people enjoyed the full trust and confidence of peoples and governments, but above all in the Arab World itself.

Vienna's neutrality in the post World War II era, especially in the beydays of the cold war, had granted it a singular position in the undertaking of the cause of peace and progress worldwide. No one can forget the sincere Austrian contributions to adopting global disarmament policies, particularly in the field of nuclear and mass destruction weapons. Likewise, Austria's contributions to bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots in this world were so impressive that they got recognised and rewarded by all states as it was finally decided to have Vienna house the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). Also in recognition of the growing international stature of Austria, its capital became the third major seat for the United Nations Organisation, after New York and Geneva. Currently Vienna hosts a variety of international organisations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Drug Control Programme (IDCP). This is testimony to Austria's record as a catalyst for international cooperation and development.

On the bilateral level, Austria and Jordan have always enjoyed the best of relations that date back to the early 1950s. The Austrian government offered the Kingdom's aircraft sanctuary during the Gulf war and maintained friendly and solid relations with it at a time when we were misunderstood by many others over our position on the Gulf crisis and war.

The understanding and appreciation of that stance by the Austrian government and people will always be remembered by all Jordanians as a major proof of Austrian impartiality in handling international conflicts. The warmth with which President Klestil was received by the King is a token of Jordan's friendship and appreciation for Austria and for what it stands in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday welcomed a visit to Jordan by Austrian President Thomas Klestil and said that Jordanians appreciate the Austrian people's friendship and take pride in their president's visit to Jordan. The fact that this is the first trip outside Europe for the president reflects the strength of relations between two countries which have their roots deeply embedded in cultural, political and economic cooperation, said the paper. Not only do the peoples of Austria and Jordan reciprocate each other's respect and affection, they also have common understanding of a host of world and regional issues, said the daily. Jordan appreciates Austria's support for Jordan and its continued assistance in times of need and the Jordanian people take pride in the friendship of the Austrian people who back the Kingdom's efforts to attain peace, security and stability, said the daily. In welcoming the Austrian president, Jordan hopes that the visit would give further momentum to the ongoing efforts to bolster bilateral ties and cooperation in all fields, said the paper.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily urged the government to take measures designed to end the existing coordination between the Jordanians and the Palestinians in the light of the Gaza-Jericho first agreement between the PLO and Israel. Salameh Elkour said that now that the agreement has become a reality, Jordan should consider placing higher Jordanian national interests above all other considerations. The writer said that Jordan, which has been providing facilities, support and backing for the Palestinians, and shouldering heavy burdens towards enabling the Palestinians to realise their national goals, should now reexamine the situation carefully. The government ought to take extra precautionary measures to fend off any harmful plots that could be concocted behind its back causing harm to its higher national interests, demanded the writer. We do respect the rights of the Palestinian people and that of their legitimate representatives in determining the future of the Palestinian people, provided that this does not infringe on the freedom of the Jordanian people and their right to free decision, said the writer. He said mutual respect of our brother's rights can only bolster future bilateral cooperation at all levels.

New Haiti leader aims to end army violence

By Michael Norton
The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — New Prime Minister Robert Malval outlined his dream to diplomatically end the violence that has plagued the country since the 1991 coup overthrowing Mr. Aristide.

But the 50-year-old businessman, sworn in Monday in Washington, returned home Tuesday to face soldiers reluctant to allow the return in October of Mr. Malval's boss, ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

He also must urge lawmakers to approve the separation of the army from the police force, and persuade the coup backers to accept the presence of a 1,000-member U.N. military technical assistance team.

Nonetheless, he sees the possibility of his dream of civilian government without military intervention: "We believe we stand on the threshold," he said.

At his installation Monday in the sweltering Haitian embassy, Mr. Malval gave a stark message to those who may try to block the country's democratic rebirth. "You may kill us but you will never kill the dream of the people of Haiti to get their freedom," Mr. Malval said.

Mr. Aristide, looking on, said: "Today is a sign that the return to democracy will become a reality." He is to return home Oct. 30 under a U.N.-mediated plan agreed to by the army.

Mr. Malval knows how cruel history has been to Haiti since its people staged the modern world's first successful slave rebellion. "Since 1804," he told the Organisation of American States (OAS) late Monday, "the Haitian people have sought to achieve liberty, equality and fraternity."

He pledged to restore human rights, noting an OAS human rights report that found at least

1,500 people have been killed in the 1991 coup overthrowing Mr. Aristide.

Mr. Malval also must attempt to reorganise an economy shattered by nearly two years of international sanctions. The sanctions, intended to pressure the military to restore democracy, were suspended Friday. But economists say their suspension is no cure-all.

"It would be illusory to believe the end of the embargo will put an end to the important economic problems of this country, since all of its resources — natural, material, human and financial have been affected," Central Bank economist Kessner Pharel has told Radio Metropole.

Mr. Malval's incoming cabinet is finding out that its predecessors spent freely despite the suspension of foreign aid, slumping corporate tax receipts and dwindling customs' charges under a flood of contraband.

The military-backed regimes reversed internationally applauded austerity programmes imposed by Mr. Aristide.

Since the coup, high-ranking army officers and bureaucrats have been accused of heavy involvement in contraband operations and of raking off money from state-run enterprises.

"There is corruption from the top of the ladder to the bottom," outgoing Commerce Minister Saidel Laine said earlier this year. The government is by far the biggest employer in Haiti, the Americas' poorest nation.

Sociologist Herard Jadotte, an aide to the military-backed governments, said government workers could begin a sabotage campaign if Mr. Malval attempted a purge.

Mr. Malval promised "no witch-hunt" of government workers but told parliament last week that bureaucrats must prove their competence.

The earthquake of accords and their impact on Arab Americans and American Jews

By Dr. James Zogby

THE NEWS of a breakthrough agreement between Israel and the PLO hit Washington like an earthquake last week. Initial reactions among Arab Americans and American Jews have differed only slightly from those in the Middle East. For the most part, there was widespread excitement and support. The opposition in both camps was caught by surprise and has yet to mobilise.

While many Arab Americans have followed the recent fissures in the PLO, and some have voiced their support for the dissidents who charge a lack of democracy or frustration over administrative issues, the drama and significance of the agreement has nevertheless won praise.

There are Arab American ideological opponents of the accords, to be sure, those who fear that "Gaza-Jericho" is a trap or those, especially the 1948 refugees from Haifa, Jaffa, Akko, etc., who feel enormous personal loss and even anger. There are also Hamas supporters who have denounced the agreement as a betrayal. But the problem faced by these Arab American opponents of the accords is their inability to propose any meaningful alternative. The mystical appeals to unity or continued struggle ring hollow. As if there haven't already been eight decades of struggle, or as if unity in itself were a solution. Most Palestinian Americans who have called our offices or who have called into television and radio shows simply express relief that peace may be at hand and that the bloodshed and daily brutality and humiliation of the occupation may be coming to an end.

"These people are not dreamers; they are aware of all the difficulties these accords will face and are also aware of all the pitfalls that may still need to be skirted before peace becomes a reality. But what most Arab American analysts, especially those working in American politics, have come to realise is that "politics is the art of the possible."

It has long been clear to Arab Americans (as it has now become clear to the PLO) that no American administration was going to intervene to press concessions from Israel. In a sense, the Norway meetings represented a certain symmetry. Mr. Rabin came to realise that the Palestinian delegation appointed under the Madrid rules couldn't make an agreement and the PLO realised that the U.S. was not going to push Israel into making an agreement and so both parties needed to make an agreement with each other.

While many Arab Americans would have liked to see Israel yield territory immediately and

recognise a Palestinian state, that, we knew, was simply not going to happen. The real obstacle to a more dramatic initial accord was the fact that one-half of the Knesset is threatening Mr. Rabin's political life. Absent U.S. government pressure, or any other set of other currently unavailable political forces, the current Israel-PLO accord represents the best deal available.

But more than that, the fact that Israel has now talked to the PLO has created a new and striking political dynamic that may have an important and liberating impact on Arab Americans and American politicians who have until now paid a bitter price for doing the same thing.

And, despite our internal debate, there is real enthusiasm for what has occurred.

"As AIPAC ponders the prospect of lobbying to win congressional support for a U.S. grant to finance a PLO-led interim government in Gaza and West Bank, one of its leaders expressed... his realization of the dramatic effect of this earthquake. Arab Americans, in an entirely different way, are preparing for a new political reality. Will this agreement, they wonder, open doors in Washington that have until now been closed. What, are they asking, are the new challenges and new opportunities that this new accord will bring?"

American Jews are also experiencing an internal debate. They were ill-prepared for the earthquake. The American Likudniks were schooled for many years to view any interaction with the PLO as taboo and "anti-Israeli." Palestinian nationalism was similarly viewed as unspeakable. To see major American Jewish leaders, therefore, praising the wisdom and courage of Rabin for having talked with PLO is, to say the least, rather startling.

While such a view is to be expected from the Americans for Peace Now and even the American Jewish Congress, it is interesting to note that AIPAC is organising a campaign to "sell" the agreement to the Jewish community in order to counter expected opposition from their right-wing elements. Given recent upheavals within AIPAC, this agreement can help both to transform the organisation, solidify the position of its new pro-Labour President Steven Grossman and convince the Rabin government of its loyalty.

American supporters of Labour, even those within AIPAC, are therefore deeply invested in making this agreement work. If it succeeds, they (like Rabin) will win their battle with the right. If it fails, they (like Rabin) will lose their hard-earned leadership within the community.

Weekly Political Pulse

The Oslo deal — federation, but with who?

THE declaration of principles on interim self-government struck between Israel and the PLO in Oslo on August 19, 1993, contains many provisions on joint Israeli-Palestinian cooperation. Over and above Article X, calling for the creation of a joint Israeli-Palestinian liaison committee to deal with all issues requiring coordination for the purpose of implementing the accord between them, there is Article XI which throws additional light on the extent of the future cooperation between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This provision calls for the establishment of a joint economic cooperation committee with a mandate to develop and implement in a cooperative manner the programmes identified in the protocols attached to the declaration.

The envisaged cooperation under the latter article, as spelled out in the third protocol to the declaration, encompasses joint actions on water resources, electricity, energy, including the construction of a joint petrochemical complex in the Gaza Strip, and gas and oil pipelines linking Palestine and Israel.

The broad cooperation contemplated under this protocol also extends to financing that would encourage investment in the new truncated Palestine and the creation of a Palestinian bank for development, as well as to communication and transportation spheres, including the construction of a new Gaza port and the linking of Palestine with Israel by a network of highways and railroads. Trade, commerce and industrial production also come within the scope of the projected cooperation. Joint Israeli-Palestinian companies in many industrial sectors, such as textiles, food, pharmaceuticals, electronics, computers and diamonds, are made part and parcel of the overall cooperation.

Topping all these joint activities will be joint programmes for the development of human resources, science and technology, and other related fields. Even environmental concerns and mass media fall within the ambit of the anticipated cooperation.

This is the extent of the Palestinian-Israeli coordination and cooperation. For all intents and purposes, therefore, there will be some form of common market between the two states on the economic front and a possible confederation on the political front.

A first glance at the protocols on these aspects of agreement suggests that sky is the limit on the expected Palestinian-Israeli joint actions in the coming decades. And it may suggest that there is more in the PLO-Israeli package deal than meets the eye. Uppermost on the mind of observers is whether the Oslo accord envisages also some kind of political association to encompass all the projected economic joint ventures between the two sides. I, personally, see an element of federation in the broad and extensive agreement struck between the Rabin-Arafat negotiating teams. If this turns out to be the case, what would become of the fact that His Majesty King Hussein was not fully informed about the negotiating process that led to the Norwegian-brokered accord, it would seem far-fetched, for the moment at least, to expect that there is much left for the projected Jordanian-Palestinian unity unless, of course, Amman accepts integration

into the overall scheme.

Reading through the fine lines in His Majesty King Hussein's television interview with Ghasan Tawil few days ago, one senses the bitter disappointment of the Jordanian side over the way the PLO kept Amman in the dark. And when the Monarch declares that "we reject any agreement to which we are not a party and any imposition of such agreement on us," it becomes simply clear that while accepting the prerogative of the Palestinians to make their own independent decisions, the extent of the Jordanian support to their deal will not go as far as the level where it may affect Jordan itself, one way or another.

This is in essence a conditional acceptance or endorsement of the PLO-Israeli agreement including its protocols notwithstanding His Majesty King Hussein's declaration Saturday that Jordan supports fully the Oslo accord. Many observers saw an expression of a complete turn about in King Hussein's press conference at the Royal Palace. I do not see a substantive difference between what the monarch had said earlier on the subject and what he enunciated Saturday. On both occasions, King Hussein expressed total support for an independent Palestinian decision but did not conceal his disappointment at the fact that the details of the agreement was not revealed to him in due course. Now that the official text of the agreement was disclosed to Jordan Friday, the King found also the contents of the accord generally acceptable not in so far as they affect to Jordan but rather as far as they offer good possibilities for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis especially when it became clear that the return of the Gaza-Jericho deal is only the beginning of the process for the implementation of Resolution 242 on the entire West Bank including East Jerusalem.

In retrospect, the region had a hint of where the Kingdom, really stands on the Palestinian-Israeli accord earlier when Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali stated Thursday that the agreement "would not hurt Jordan." "On the contrary," the Prime Minister went on to say, "it will provide an opportunity for Palestinian refugees since 1967 to return to the West Bank." Dr. Al Majali had in mind the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that could be affected by the provisional consent of Israel to repatriate them. Suffice to recall that the return of Palestinian refugees and expellees in such big numbers would change not only the economic climate in the country but also the political.

The strain of the Oslo accord on the Jordanian-Palestinian relations would remain with us for a while at least. The immediate reaction of Jordan was to withdraw the "umbrella" formula that facilitated the participation of the Palestinians in the peace process. Actually this decision is a natural result of the accord which rendered the umbrella scheme redundant after it was overtaken by the recent developments. This leaves the Jordanian-Palestinian relations in need for intensive care notwithstanding the rhetoric to the contrary. The PLO needs to take the sincere initiative for healing the wounds and Jordan can be expected to respond in kind in due course.

LETTERS

History behind Oslo accord

To the Editor:

I think many would agree that the Jordan Times has always been the best source of balanced and in-depth news and analyses in Jordan.

After reading Rami Khouri's column, "Jericho-Gaza — a small triumph to build on" (Aug. 31), and Lami Andoni's article, "Arafat is taking new risk for peace — the question is: Will it work?" (Sept. 2-3), I feel compelled to write on the issue in question. There is no doubt that the quick events of an unexpected breakthrough between the PLO and the Israelis is history in the making, to say the least. Hence, it should be looked upon from a historical point of view by connecting the news of the breakthrough with events that preceded it. To do that, one can go back as far as one chooses in the history of the whole issue. Let me recall some events since the Madrid Conference, which was another major historical event.

The Palestinians went to Madrid reluctantly and under very difficult conditions and pressure from many sides, including Arab parties under one major pretext: that the longer Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular waited, the less they would get from Israel due to the new international circumstances of the "new world order," among other reasons.

It was obvious from the beginning of the Madrid process that the measure of success or failure of the Arab negotiators would mainly depend on the amount of their real coordination or lack of it. It was equally obvious from the start, as is now, that this coordination was at a minimal level, as His Majesty King Hussein confirmed during his most recent interview with Mr. Ghasan Tawil.

Several times prior to the rounds of negotiations in Washington the Palestinians were reluctant to continue the talks, particularly in the ninth round after Israel deported some 400 Palestinians to south Lebanon. To suspend Arab participation then would have been universally acceptable, thus forcing Israel to repatriate the expellees, setting a precedent for Israel to give in to international legitimacy and pressure, and improving the Arab negotiator's position. Instead, the Palestinian team was once again pressured from every direction, including from some of its Arab partners, to go back to Washington.

The last few months witnessed the near destruction of the PLO, again as a result of political and financial pressures from many sides, including Arab ones, and it reached a point of numerous resignations from within the organisation and deepening internal rifts.

The secret talks between the PLO and Israel were carried out in Europe, which has major interests in the Middle East and was eager to play an active role in the peace process since the beginning, but, like the U.N., was kept away by the Americans. The Europeans, anyway, have always been more balanced than the U.S. ever was when it came to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Therefore, to be fair to everybody, thing should be put in perspective and one major question should be asked before the real reasons behind Mr. Arafat's taking a new risk for peace? Victor Hugo's character (Jean Valjean), committed the crime of stealing and was judged and sentenced without considering what he stole and, more importantly, why? And what would Washington have brought us that is better than what came out of Europe? Many other questions, including the timing and sequence of events, if asked, would surely explain the logic behind making such a decision.

In the end, may I say that Mr. Khouri's column was always of great interest to me and rarely failed to express my views and feelings. Ms. Andoni is also certainly commendable for her balanced and in-depth analyses and for her professionalism. I would like to thank you for having such high calibre journalists and writers among your staff.

Mohammad Atiyeh,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

U.S.-Russian space station will cost America some prestige and jobs

By Harry F. Rosenthal

The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The new U.S. and Russian space alliance may rescue the space station programmes of both nations but at a cost of American prestige and some jobs.

The two nations have settled on a joint venture that will allow American astronauts to spend a total two-years' time on the orbiting Mir space station and put U.S. experiments on Russian craft. It also calls for mutual development of an electrical power system to replace damaged space station solar arrays.

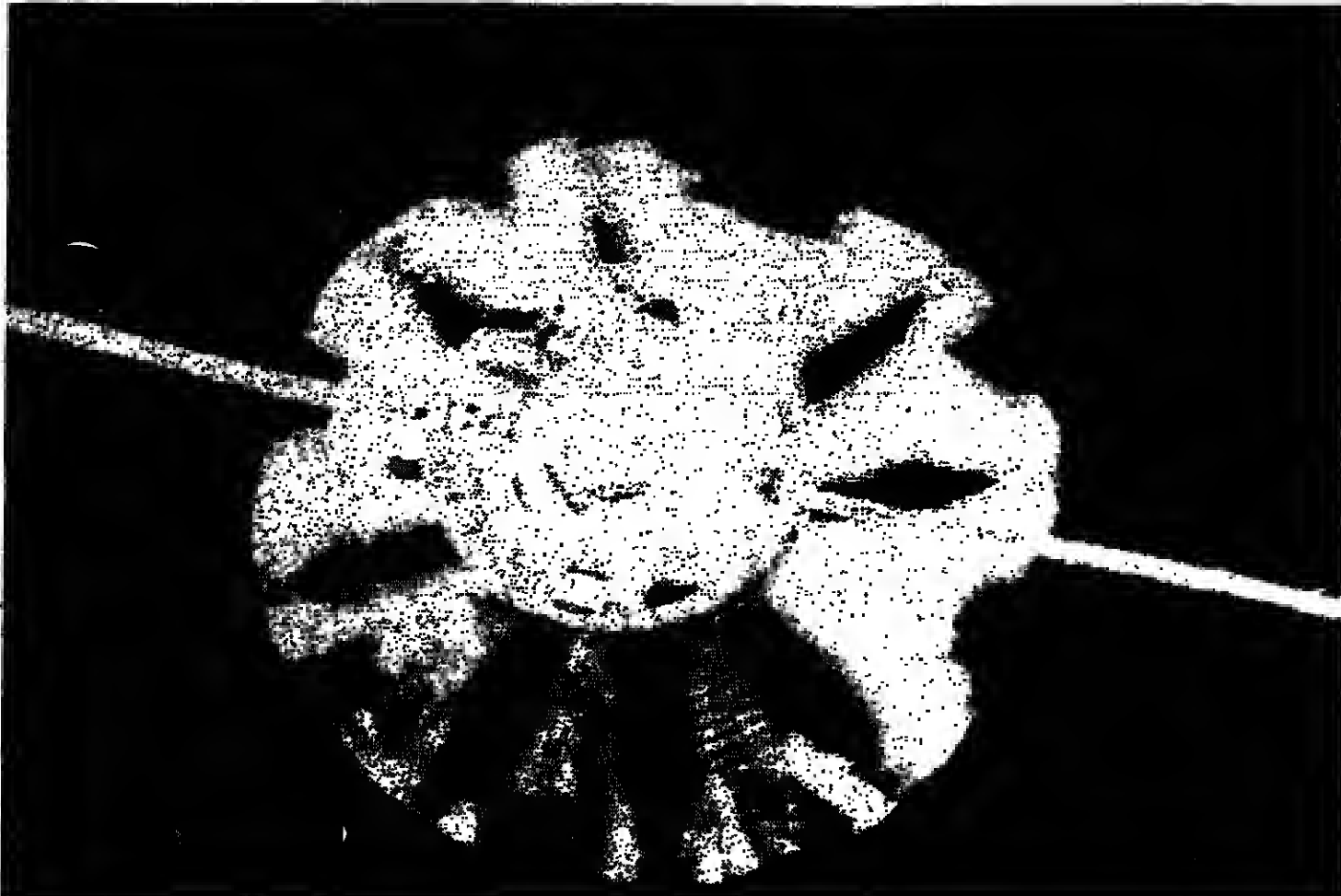
"It is the intent of the U.S. and Russia to undertake a cooperative human space flight programme," according to a statement issued following two days of meetings between Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Russian Space Agency were instructed to develop a detailed plan of activities by Nov. 1 that then will be cemented with specific agreements.

The agreement marks a significant change in U.S. space policy, which since the 1950s has been driven by achieving preeminence over the former Soviet Union in rocketry and space exploration.

And it marks another turn in the long road to build space station Freedom, the Reagan-era scheme that already has cost \$9 billion and which has been a subject of scorn in much of the U.S. scientific community and hostility in a cost-conscious Congress. Freedom was scheduled for construction in earth orbit by the end of the decade.

"The combined space station will be significantly better than any of the options we could orbit on our own," Mr. Gore said at Thursday's signing ceremony. He said the new station also would be less expensive and would fly



The transport spacecraft Progress, with a solar sail from the orbital Mir station, conducting on experiment. Americans

want to join the Russians in a bid to rescue the space station programmes of both nations (AFP photo)

sooner than Freedom. NASA administrator Daniel Goldin said: "A new partnership in space between two former adversaries offers considerable economic advantages for both countries."

Mr. Goldin said: "Russian participation will not have a significant impact on U.S. jobs" but conceded "there will be areas where we rely on proven Russian

systems."

The scope of activities envisioned will far eclipse previous joint ventures between the two spacefaring nations.

The cash-hungry Russians will be paid \$400 million in the next four years for goods and services, which include the two modules to be attached to their Mir for American experiments.

The Russians reportedly have

built the modules but don't have money for the instruments and experiments to use them.

A major concession by the United States calls for the two nations to "operate in an orbit which is accessible by both U.S. and Russian resources."

That means some launches from Russia's space port at Baikonur, which puts spacecraft into orbits much farther north

and south than from the United States. NASA generally flies the shuttle in orbits at a 28.5 degree angle from the Equator. In order to power its way into the Russian orbit of 51.6 degrees, the space shuttle has to reduce its cargo weight by 5,455 kilos — roughly one fourth.

The weight loss consequences will be felt in reduced cargo on construction flights from the Un-

ited States during assembly of the space station. It also causes difficulties for two of America's international partners, Japan, and the European Space Agency.

Japan has opposed the Russian orbit because its space station module is so heavy it will have to be split in two for transport on the shuttle. The Europeans have much the same problem, but they have been working on reducing the size of their module.

The U.S.-Russia plan calls for development of a common space suit and common environmental-control and life-support systems. That, too, will be a plus and a minus for the United States. The Russian space suit is conceded to be better than its American counterpart, but cosmonauts have had to cut space walks short because their visors fog.

One area in which both nations will profit is by pooling research on using solar dynamics to create electricity. The electricity-producing solar arrays now in use are big, bulky, create drag and deteriorate in the harsh space environment.

An alternative is solar dynamics in which dishes, reflectors and concentrators collect solar energy and use it to run an engine that generates power. Using such a device would eliminate the need for a truss, the lattice-like frame that holds various components.

The administration may have trouble selling the joint venture to Congress. The space station survived extinction in the house on two grounds: American jobs and American preeminence in space.

But the Senate, which has yet to act on the NASA budget, may wonder whether the United States is subsidising Russia and creating jobs there to build a new space station to which the United States will attach a laboratory.

And, if that is the case, how can the United States claim preeminence?

Even the teachers do not trust public schools

By George F. Will

SAN DIEGO — In November, California, frequent incubator of America's future, will conduct a vote eclipsing in importance last year's banal presidential choice. If passed, Proposition 174 will offer parents vouchers worth at least half the cost of educating a child in a public school (currently \$5,200) and redeemable as private school tuition. If the chosen school costs less than \$2,600, the saving can be used for subsequent grades, or for college.

Private schools often get better results (gauged by test scores and graduation rates) than public schools, but cost less per pupil than public schools. So the larger the number of Californians who would use Proposition 174 vouchers to choose private schools, the more the state would save. Furthermore, Proposition 174 would spur creation of schools at a time when California's burgeoning school-age population requires, if class sizes are to be maintained, creation of a 600-pupil school every day for 10 years.

Inflation-adjusted public education spending per pupil has about doubled every 20 years since 1945. San Diego teachers' salaries doubled in the last decade, and top administrators average \$90,000 a year.

Many who supported forced busing to produce racial balance were liberals with children in private schools; many who oppose making school choice available to all parents are themselves parents choosing private schools (the Clintons, for example).

Nationwide, about half of all urban public school teachers with school-age children send their children to private schools. If the data are being compiled, the percentage of California public school teachers sending their children away from public schools is higher than the percentage of the general population doing so, supporters of Proposition 174 can ask: What do teachers know about the public schools that voters ought to bear in mind in November?

Opponents of Proposition 174 have sunk to what can best be called boring hysteria. For example, Kathleen Brown, the Democrats' probable gubernatorial nominee, warns darkly that a "witches' coven" is talking about starting a school funded by Proposition 174 vouchers. And a hysteria-monger on the side of the California Teachers Association says that in private schools "a science course could be teaching kids how to make Molotov cocktails."

Actually, what the union calls "unregulated and unaccountable voucher schools" would not be immune from state regulation, and would be accountable to empowered parents who could remove their children from

schools with silly curricula. In contrast, under public education's semi-monopoly many parents have no alternative to public schools teaching sexual "responsibility" (as defined by condom-pushing "experts"), environmental "responsibility" (as defined by people who think Al Gore is a scientist) and multicultural "sensitivity" (as defined by whatever racial, sexual or ethnic faction has captured the curriculum).

Del Weber, president of the teachers union, warns that private school teachers are subject to fewer credentialing requirements than public school teachers. Ken Kachigian, strategist for the pro-174 campaign, replies that the public school system produces lower results with its higher credentials, so in what sense are they "higher"?

The National Education Association (NEA), the California association's national counterpart, is the nation's largest and most politically aggressive union. At last year's Democratic convention about one-eighth of the delegates were NEA members.

The California union tried to block a vote on Proposition 174 because "there are some proposals that are so evil that they should never even be presented to the voters." This autumn the California union will spend lavishly to spread hysteria — witches' covens, Molotov cocktails, whatever — about the "evil" of parental choice.

Although the National Education Association claims not to know how much state and local organisations like the California association spend on politics, Forbes magazine, extrapolating from spending in four representative states, estimates that at least \$16 million is spent annually. Almost that much may be spent in California in support of what Forbes calls the NEA's "Brezhnev doctrine" — socialism, in the form of government control of education, may not be rolled back anywhere.

But Californians have noticed the perverse correlation: increasing NEA arrogance and increasing spending on public education coinciding with a decline in educational quality. And Californians can take lawmaking into their own hands.

In 1978 they slashed property taxes with Proposition 13, thereby presaging the 1980 election results. The NEA is terrified that Proposition 174, another blow against government's self-aggrandizing grip on society, may have a similar national resonance.

Mr. Kachigian thinks that if his side is outspent by "only" 3 to 1, Proposition 174 will pass. The NEA asserts that permitting parental choice will devastate public education. Mr. Kachigian can rest his case on that assertion, the NEA's damning assessment of public education — Washington Post.

Kuwaiti rolling pigeons command sky-high prices

By Inal Ernan

KUWAIT — Acrobatic pigeons are all the rage in Kuwait where "rollers" — birds that stage reverse somersaults in flight — are worth their weight in gold.

"She's just like a dancer," gazed owner Walid Al Dughashem as one of his birds fluttered high above the Kuwaiti desert and then slowed, as if taking a deep breath.

The bird started rolling backwards, repeatedly revolving in a clear blue sky while its wings made rapid, sharp claps. Seconds later it resumed its normal flight.

Mr. Dughashem, a fireman and a fancier in one of the Gulf's most popular hobbies,

was impressed. "A brilliant woman dancer can give a new meaning to your life, and so can a pigeon," he said. "This is an art."

More than 4,000 Kuwaitis raise pigeons, mostly for the pleasures of developing and watching their acrobatic ability — a genetic characteristic cultivated through breeding.

Pigeon raising here dates back to earliest times but the practice has grown in recent decades because oil wealth has prompted an enthusiastic private market in the birds.

Like fanciers in dozens of other countries, Kuwaitis also breed homing pigeons for racing and "fancy" pigeons for beauty.

But acrobatic birds, especially the "galah" (roller) that

tumbles backwards claws-over-head, are by far their favourites. The best are the stars of competitions held every winter.

Kuwaitis think less highly of other pigeon breeds that twist like a corkscrew in flight or tumble as if hit by a bullet.

"The revolving pigeons they have in Europe are beginners. They are not the type we want because they do not play the games we want," said leading breeder Mohammad Al Hamad.

Kuwaitis say they obtained the best "rollers" from enthusiasts in the Iraqi region of Al Zubair about 40 years ago. They went on to corner the market in the region's best breeds.

The bobby can be a profit-

able business. Kuwaitis will pay 4,000 dinars (\$13,000) for the privilege of owning a galah with a particular flair to its odd-looking reverse somersault.

Mr. Walid said the best breeders could earn up to 40,000 dinars (\$132,000) a year from sales of chicks or adult birds.

Ethosist Radwao Al Obaid said he had bought a pigeon for 4,000 dinars last year. "I wouldn't sell it for less than 5,000 dinars (\$16,500)," he said.

Mr. Walid and his civil servant brother Jamal and Tareq keep about 1,000 birds in a 5,000-square-metre smallholding in the desert near Kuwait city.

Getting lost can be the main problem for young birds in the featureless, snooker-table flatness of Kuwait's desert.

Others simply drop dead, roasted in their cages by summer heat that can rise over 50 degrees Centigrade (122 Fahrenheit) or exhausted by flying in the oven-like temperatures.

"We make the pigeon chick fly when it is 2½ months old. The younger you teach them the better," said Mr. Hamad.

"Pigeons are just like kids," said Mr. Walid. "The first time they go out they try to come back, but they get lost. After they become familiar with a place, it becomes easy."

Birds are housed between one and 20 to a cage. Some of the cages are air-conditioned with electric fans, hanging miniature decorative jars and a sculpted pigeon-sized basin for a bed.

The Kuwaitis train their birds to fly in strong winter winds and competitors are judges no more than just rolling.

Steadiness is highly prized. As in human gymnastics, the birds' ability to finish their exercise by landing gracefully — in the birds' case on a perch — is also crucial.

"If a bird can fly over the very same area and roll, even if the wind is strong, it is a good galah," Mr. Jamal said. "The stronger the wind the

better the flying," said Mr. Hamad.

"A good pigeon moves forward steadily into the wind while revolving. It must also lean sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right, and making a clapping sound with its wings."

"The normal wind speed should be between 25 and 70 kilometres per hour. If there wasn't this force of wind there would be no difference between a one dinar (\$3.3) pigeon and a 10,000 dinar (\$33,000) one."

Breeders fuss constantly about the birds' health. One once sent an ailing star performer to bird specialists in Europe. Another reared an air-conditioned apartment to house pigeons weakened by summer heat.

Breeders investigate the birds' bloodline thoroughly and even compile books of pigeon family trees.

Cross currents of change impel Israel, PLO towards peace

By Nicolas B. Tatro

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was running out of time and needed to deliver on campaign promises before his volatile coalition came apart.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat also felt the heat: he was running out of money and facing a rebellion in his ranks.

Those factors helped break a taboo on direct negotiations that struggled previous initiatives. But they were also influenced by larger forces, crosscurrents of change that swept the region and the world.

First there was the Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

After nearly six years, the 1.8 million Palestinians in the occupied lands were weary of bloodshed and squeezed economically, by incessant strike calls and a loss of jobs and commerce in Israel. Israelis have killed 1,135 Palestinians in clashes and 748 Arabs have been killed by their fellows, most on suspicion of collaborating with Israel, in the uprising.

Abdul Sattar Qassem, a political science professor at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, said the self-rule plan was "very timely" because Palestinians were in no position to resist. "It is the people who face social and economic collapse and not Arafat," he said.

Palestinian leaders were nonetheless anxious to transform the uprising into an initiative that would end Israeli occupation before the anger and frustration were turned on them.

For Israel, the intifada ended illusions about living with the status quo. At least 145 Israelis died in the uprising.

Gaza, with its exploding

population and poverty, could no longer be controlled. Pressure built on politicians to find a solution that would bring the citizen-soldiers home.

There was also the Gulf war. The PLO backed the wrong horse, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and angry oil sheikhs cut off funds to Mr. Arafat — more than \$20 million of which had been spent in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip every month.

The war also prompted a change in Israeli strategic thinking.

Israel's missiles had easily reached Tel Aviv and wreaked havoc. The West Bank and Gaza Strip were no longer seen as a buffer against attack.

"At the same time, there was the toll of the intifada. The Israeli public was not only tired of the repeated violence, they were also sick and tired of Gaza. It became difficult to make a case for Gaza being vital to security," said Nimrod Novick, an adviser to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres who helped negotiate the Gaza-Jericho plan with the PLO and Egypt.

Another regional development was the expansion of Islamic fundamentalism.

The fundamentalist Hamas, with wide influence in Gaza's crowded camps was challenging Mr. Arafat's control. The Gaza-Jericho option gave him an opportunity to recapture the momentum and to personally set a foothold on Palestinian land before his influence faded.

A peace agreement was also likely to restart the flow of money. Europe had reportedly promised more than a half-billion dollars in development aid and

the Gulf states were expected to resume their support, as well.

Mr. Rabin's main problem was a political crisis at home that could rob him of the partners he needed to pursue the peace initiative.

Mr. Rabin, 71, needed quick results and he hoped for emergence of a strong local Palestinian leadership had not developed. Only the PLO could solve the problem.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was another major factor. Moscow had been the main arms supplier for radical Arab regimes such as Syria, Iraq and Libya as well as Palestinian factions. The radicals could not afford to keep up once the Soviet support ended.

The war option was effectively closed because the arms gap widened in the favour of Israel, which continued to get \$3 billion a year in U.S. aid and had its own high-tech firms to develop new technology.

Yair Hirschfeld, a Haifa University professor who opened the secret channel to the PLO for Israel, said both sides were aware of the changed international climate.

In the new world order, he said, the big powers all were pulling in the same direction, urging stability. But they balked at getting involved in ethnic disputes. Wars in former Soviet Republics like Azerbaijan and Moldova had little impact, for example.

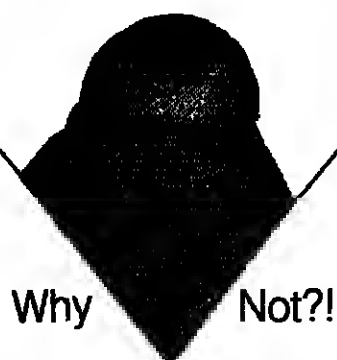
"On the global level, there was an emerging point of view that posed a danger to both Palestinians and Israelis: That if you want to kill yourself, go ahead, we won't get involved."

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Sihanouk reverses split with U.N.

PHNOM PENH (R) — Prince Norodom Sihanouk, in a letter to the United Nations in Cambodia, has reversed his earlier decision to more to do with the international force.

In a separate letter to his son, Co-President Norodom Ranariddh, Prince Sihanouk also seemed about to make a U-turn on his refusal to return to the Cambodian throne he abdicated in 1955.

Hours after sending off angry acrimonies to U.N. peacekeeping chief Yasushi Akashi and Cambodian political parties, Prince Sihanouk sent conciliatory messages.

"Owing to the affection and attitude toward Akashi and U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, I have the honour to accept to restore relations with UNTAC," Prince Sihanouk said in a faxed letter to Mr. Akashi obtained from the royal palace Sunday.

"I will have the honour to receive you in Peking on Sept. 1," he said in the letter, which

palace sources said responded to a long letter sent by Akashi late Saturday.

Few were surprised by the reversal as Prince Sihanouk, head of state until he resigned the chair of the Supreme National Council Saturday, is given to abrupt changes of heart.

He also has a track record of blurring the boundaries between public and private statements.

A source close to the Sihanouk camp said earlier letters, apparently sent in a fit of pique, were intended to be private although copies were faxed to news agencies in Peking, where Prince Sihanouk is currently in residence.

Prince Sihanouk sent the letters because he was upset by news reports that foreigners, including officials of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), had criticised the interim government's intention to restore the monarchy, the source said.

"Sihanouk has always been very supportive of UNTAC. He just said if that's the way they

respond maybe I'll let them do the work alone," the source said.

There has been friction between Prince Sihanouk and UNTAC during the international body's presence in Cambodia, where in May it organised democratic elections designed to end 13 years of civil war.

The volatile prince has criticised U.N. officials for meddling in Cambodian politics and trying to shape the government that emerges from the democratic process, for instance by opposing his plan for an interim government.

The U.N. is careful publicly to emphasise Prince Sihanouk's importance for the future of the country, but officials privately express frustration at his frequent political gyrations.

Prince Sihanouk also sent a letter to Prince Ranariddh, his eldest son and a co-leader of the interim government, that took the stuffing out of his earlier refusal to become king.

"I have the right to make requests but I have no right to resist the will of the Cambodian people, who have already chosen their legal representatives in parliament," he said.

Last week, Prince Ranariddh and Co-President Hun Sen presented Mr. Sihanouk with a blueprint for Cambodia's political future which would restore the throne as part of a constitutional monarchy.

Prince Sihanouk turned down the idea without giving a very clear picture of what he envisaged as an alternative. In his letter to Prince Ranariddh, he prevaricated further.

"I ask only one thing, that I not be implicated in the final decision of the National Assembly on issues concerned with the constitution," he said. The Sihanoukist source said the prince did not want people to think he was pulling strings behind the scenes.

The new letters did not say if Prince Sihanouk would return to Phnom Penh on Sept. 15 as originally planned. On Saturday he said he would stay in Peking until he received a faxed order from the National Assembly asserting his position as head of state.

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J.S. Congress returns to face more controversy

WASHINGTON (R) — After running most of the year over S. President Bill Clinton's economic plan, Congress returns on Monday to face more controversy over health care and crime.

The Senate reconvenes Tuesday to vote on the nomination of Evelyn Elders as surgeon general.

The House of Representatives back Wednesday.

Some critics of Dr. Elders — outspoken advocate of abortion rights and birth control — say they expect her to be confirmed despite their objections.

Mr. Clinton seems sure to face tough battles on other issues. Democrats have a 56-44 majority and control the House by 253 to 175 with one Republican.

The president's plan to cut the deficit through tax increases and spending cuts passed by two votes in the House and 51 in the Senate just before the recess.

Now he wants Congress to ratify the hotly contested North American free trade agreement (NAFTA) — an uphill political fight — reform health care and approve a tough crime bill.

Any one of these would be a major achievement.

"Many people say I'm pushing too hard for change," Mr. Clinton said in a recent broadcast. "I have faith that together we can make real the promise of democracy for all Americans."

The major business for Congress in September will be approving money needed to run government agencies in the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1. Only one of the 13 separate appropriations bills have been passed and there is pressure to make further spending cuts, especially in defence.

Foreign policy will also get plenty of attention. There is growing concern about U.S. military involvement in Somalia and frustration over the war in

Bosnia.

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole of Kansas sent Mr. Clinton an open letter last week urging him to withdraw U.S. forces from Somalia and focus instead on a firmer stand in Bosnia.

The president won on the budget without any Republican votes, but he may get more Republican support for NAFTA than from his fellow Democrats.

Many Democratic leaders have joined organised labour and 1992 presidential candidate Ross Perot in opposing the trade pact, fearing it will move jobs to Mexico where wages are lower.

Sen. Dole, Mr. Clinton's chief opponent on the budget bill, has become his top ally on NAFTA, predicting the pact will create a free trade zone including the United States, Canada and Mexico and that it can be passed.

"I think in the Senate — I can't speak for the House, where it's probably going to be very close —

we have enough votes if we can furnish 34 or 35 Republicans," Sen. Dole said in a television interview.

Mr. Clinton has also expressed confidence, saying that once members of Congress examine the pact they will support it.

Sen. Dole said he would try to cooperate on health care reform and the crime bill. Mr. Clinton will announce his health programme, put together by his wife Hillary, in about two weeks.

"I want to work with the president where we (Republicans) can," Sen. Dole said. "We've got issues like NAFTA, health care, where we hope we can be helpful."

Both parties want to cut health costs and extend medical insurance to all Americans, but differ on how to do it.

Overhauling almost every congressional action is the November 1994 election when all 435 House seats and 33 of 100 Senate slots will be at stake.



Kremlin spins Russo-Ukraine arms deal against parliament

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin, backed by a deal with Ukraine that looks lopsidedly in Russia's favour, is rebuilding an image of strength as he goes into "decisive" battle with his political opponents in Moscow.

With a combination of forceful attacks on his foes — notably Vice President Alexander Rutskoi — and patriotic appeals for saving the "prestige" of the state, Mr. Yeltsin has sought to minimise openings for new assaults on the Kremlin.

This was especially evident Saturday, hours after Mr. Yeltsin's return from the Russo-Ukrainian summit in Yalta, when his spokesman released a statement stating the president was the only leader in a position to protect Russia's interests.

The Yalta accord "clearly shows who can effectively defend Russia's national interests, the interests of the Russian people, the interests of the Russian army and navy, the interests of Russian minorities in former Soviet republics," the statement said.

It asserted that efforts by the conservative parliament to discredit Mr. Yeltsin and the government were "even more ridiculous" against the backdrop of Mr. Yeltsin's achievement with the Ukraine accord.

At the Yalta meeting, Ukraine agreed to transfer its nuclear weapons to Russia for dismantlement and to cede part or all of its share of the Black Sea Fleet in exchange for financial compensation and debt relief from Russia, officials said this weekend.

Although the deal worked out at Yalta is still subject to formal signature, ratification by parliament and a host of modifications, the Kremlin has held it up as both an emblem of Mr. Yeltsin's unrivalled competence and the legislature's general ineptitude.

"It is becoming more and more

footage of Mr. Yeltsin inspecting troop units near Moscow earlier in the week, reinforcing the image of a tough-minded president confronting a self-serving, incompetent parliament.

Commenting on the legislature's decision Friday to refer his decree suspending Mr. Rutskoi to the constitutional court, Mr. Yeltsin said only that "this testifies to the fact the Supreme Soviet knows neither the constitution nor the laws."

At the same time, Kremlin aides said they had overcome lingering resistance from regional administrators to the approval of a new, unified draft constitution and predicted rapid progress toward its adoption this autumn.

Parliament was expected to resume its counter-attacks on the Kremlin from Friday, the start of the next plenary session.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian government's decision to give Russia its part of the Black Sea Fleet could run into trouble in the country's unruly parliament — and on the streets.

Diplomats say it is also likely to demoralise a population already battered by the effects of economic collapse.

President Leonid Kravchuk admitted he made the concessions under duress from Russian leaders pressing Ukraine to make good on debt repayments, mainly for gas and oil.

But Mr. Kravchuk also indicated he would fight hard to defend the deal and accused opponents of ignoring disastrous economic realities.

A dejected-looking Deputy Prime Minister Valery Shmarov, however, told a news conference in Kiev Saturday: "The Russian proposals were totally unexpected. No one had ever discussed such an option before."

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India sheds one more colonial legacy

NEW DELHI (AP) — Lawyers entering an Indian court bow reverentially to the judge, and begin their arguments by addressing him as "My Lord" or "Your Lordship." But that tradition, which British colonists brought here 200 years ago, is about to end. The country's top body of lawyers, the Bar Council of India, informed the chief justice of the Supreme Court that they have voted down this tradition and told him to endorse their decision.

The Bar Council wrote to Supreme Court Chief Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah and told him to formally replace the colonial form of addressing judges with the words "sir" or "Your Honour." The change is needed, the Bar Council said, because judges are no longer the nominees of kings or queens. "The Americans have shown that we don't need these verbal trappings or these dresses to maintain the dignity of the courts," said Rakesh Lodha, a British-educated Indian lawyer who practices in the Supreme Court. After independence in 1947, India not only modelled its courts on the British system, but also retained the customs and codes of conduct introduced by its former colonial rulers. All courts, from federal to local, still conduct all their sessions in English. Despite the sweltering heat of the long summer months, lawyers in the high courts and the Supreme Court still wear black jackets, starched white shirts with winged collars and black robes. Women lawyers are not permitted to wear trousers and have to dress in the traditional Indian Sari and a high-collared blouse.

Altman picked one of favourites at Venice festival

ROME (AP) — The 50th Venice Film Festival Saturday screened Robert Altman's *Short Cuts*, favoured by many critics to win the Golden Lion first prize. The film by the veteran American director, drawn from short stories by Raymond Carver, is a mosaic of the daily dramas about the lives of ordinary people in Los Angeles. The cast includes gravel-voiced singer Tom Waits, and actors Andie MacDowell, Tim Robbins and Jack Lemmon, who has a nine-minute monologue. The director of last year's bit movie *The Player* as well as *Nashville* and *The Long Goodbye*, Altman told reporters that the movie "is my best work so far." The theme of mothers — cruel, oppressive, jealous — already touched on in the films of Liliana Cavani and Aline Isserman during the festival is taken up again by Argentine director Maria Luisa Dembegi. Her film *De Eso No Se Habla* ("We Can't Talk About This") is also in the competition. It shows a mother so powerful that she conceals from a village the fact that her daughter is a dwarf. A rich, caring Marcello Mastroianni falls in love with the girl, who ultimately rejects him to run away with a circus.

Dogfish bites man

VALENCIA, Spain (R) — Beaches in Spain's Mediterranean province of Valencia were on alert after a fish bit the toes off a 69-year-old man's foot, El Pais newspaper reported. Marine experts quoted on Spanish national radio said the creature was probably a dogfish, a small member of the shark family. El Pais said Jorge Durich Heredia kicked the 1.5 metre (five foot) fish when it swam at him, but it attacked, taking the toes of his left foot and biting him in the thigh. Mr. Durich, a retired doctor, made a tourniquet with the cord of his swimming trunks and swam 200 metres back to shore.

Japanese feel the pinch

TOKYO (AP) — Only a paltry 4.8 per cent of Japanese feel their lives have improved during the slow economic recovery over the past year, a government poll showed Sunday. It was the smallest ratio in 35 years since the government started the annual survey on the livelihood of Japanese in 1958 and compared with 7.6 per cent for last year, the prime minister's office said. On the other hand, 18.8 per cent said their living standards had dropped since a year ago, the office said. An overwhelming majority thought they belonged to the "middle class" of Japanese society with the ratio standing at 90.0 per cent, little changed from 90.2 per cent for last year, the poll showed. The office conducted the survey on 10,000 adults in May and 73.3 per cent of them responded. The poll also showed that 17.7 per cent believed that their livelihood would improve while 13.3 per cent feared their standard of living would decline and 62.5 per cent expected to maintain their status quo. Still, 69.8 per cent said they felt content with their current living standards, little changed from 69.2 per cent for last year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Supporters of Bhutto, Sharif clash

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Police were called in to restore order at an election rally held by former Premier Nawaz Sharif when his supporters clashed with workers of the arch rival Benazir Bhutto. Bhutto supporters said Sunday. The fighting erupted when the rival Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) workers started chanting anti-Sharif slogans during the election meeting in Ms. Bhutto's home town of Rawalpindi late Saturday, they said. The chanting PPP enthusiasts were attacked by irate supporters of Mr. Sharif.

Police used tear gas and batons to break up the fight. Police sources said police intervened with a light baton-charge and the fight was restored when Mr. Sharif took to the dais and asked the crowd not to beat the crowd. No one was hurt in the scuffle or the police action, they added.

China dam collapse toll hits 40

KING (AFP) — The death toll in the Aug. 17 Gashou Dam disaster has risen to 290, up from the earlier reported 252 dead and 1 injured, the People's Public Security News said Sunday. The newspaper, which did not specify whether the new figure was a final count of the victims, said four police were among the dead. Some 400 bodies were swept away by the dam waters leaving 3,000 homeless, paper added.

Sino-British talks end

KING (R) — China and Britain Sunday ended their 10th round of talks on Hong Kong's political reforms but there was little indication their outcome. British Ambassador Sir Robin McLaren told reporters outside his residence that the talks only dealt with the issue of Hong Kong's electoral system. "We have been discussing substance. I do not think I want to say if there was progress or not. I think it is not very helpful when I do... I do not want to comment on the stance," said Sir Robin, who is rarely forthcoming about the talks.

"I do not think I would like to characterise them but I think it would not be fair to say they are totally standing still," he said. The British embassy later said in a statement that the 11th day of talks will be held in Peking on Sept. 8 and 9 but gave no further details.

Pan typhoon probable toll now 46

KYO (R) — Typhoon Yancy tailed off Sunday after lashing Japan 11 days of violent winds and heavy rains that left at least 46 people injured or presumed dead, police said. At least 37 people were still missing, nine unaccounted for and 155 injured in southern Japan, police said. With the help of power shovels, hundreds of rescue workers continued to search for people buried in a huge mudslide triggered Friday by torrential rains in Kinpo, Kagoshima on the southern island of Kyushu. Of the 20 people trapped in the rubble, 16 had so far been recovered, police said. The others were feared dead.

Rebel among 25 killed in Kashmir

NAGAR, India (AFP) — Indian security forces have shot dead a militant wanted Muslim guerrilla leader, police said here but his family denied the claim. Ahsan Dar, 36, chief of the outlawed *Ummah* Mujahadeen, was slain in a gunbattle at Tangmarg, 35 miles north of this summer capital of Kashmir state, Inspector General of Police A.K. Suri said. Mr. Dar managed to stagger from the area, but died in neighbouring Phulwama district, Suri said. "He was the officer said. But we have not found his body." But Mr. Suri's militant colleagues denied the report, although they themselves admitted earlier in the day that he was dead and poured into the streets of this city firing in the air to denounce the killing. Police said 10 other militants also died in the Tangmarg gunbattle.

Rioters arrested in Rio slum massacre

DE JANEIRO (AFP) — A military police captain was arrested Sunday and accused of ordering the massacre of 21 people in a slum in western Rio, police said. A lower-ranking officer was arrested, police said. Authorities announced the arrests of five ranking police officers Friday. The arrests were the first since the slum massacre in Rio before dawn August 30 and fatally shot 21 people, many of them in their beds. Police said Captain Agnaldo de Rivas had been assigned to protect one of the key witnesses in the slayings who until Thursday was in hospital.

Arms cache found near Managua

MANAGUA (AFP) — Authorities have discovered a huge weapon cache belonging to Guatemalan guerrillas on the outskirts of Managua, the government said Sunday. A Guatemalan and a Guatemalan-born Nicaraguan were arrested near the underground cache on a hilltop outside the capital, said Assistant Interior Secretary Frank Cesar. He said the rebel arsenal, discovered Friday, was perhaps the largest on record in Nicaragua and that President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro had notified her Guatemalan counterpart, Ramiro de Leon Carpio, about the find. The cache included six rocket launchers, three grenade launchers, 1,000 rifles and machine guns, 100 electronic detonators, five cannons, 22 mortars, an anti-aircraft machine gun and almost a million rounds of various ammunition, Mr. Cesar said. The weaponry, discovered 12.5 kilometres south of Managua, belonged to the leftwing Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit, or URNG by its Spanish acronym, Mr. Cesar said.

India to probe U.S. ties with China

NEW DELHI (R) — India and China, whose relations improved decisively after the collapse of the Soviet Union, will discuss ways next week to get along with the United States, diplomats and politicians said Sunday. Indian opposition leaders said they had given a rare unanimous mandate to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to improve relations with China during his three-day visit to Peking starting Monday. But, they said, differences over India's future ties with the United States had sharpened recently after Washington pressured Russia to cancel a cryogenic rocket engine deal with New Delhi. The United States also announced sanctions last month against China and Pakistan, charging Peking with transferring forbidden missile technology to Islamabad. Indian analysts said that Washington's move was as arbitrary as its steps against India's rocket deal. "The United States has provided sufficient motivation to India and China to get together in opposing U.S. hegemonism," said K. Subramanyam, a defence expert close to the government.

Fighting breaks out in eastern Liberia

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) — Fighting broke out in eastern Liberia and has spilled over for the first time into Ivory Coast. The United Nations and the Ivorian interior minister gave conflicting accounts of the skirmishes along the Ivorian border. The differences couldn't be immediately reconciled. A U.N. statement said the clashes, which broke a six-week-old peace pact brokered by the world body, were serious. But Ivory Coast's interior minister, Emile Constant Bombet, said the fighting on the Ivorian border was an isolated incident that took place Thursday at a refugee camp of Liberians. Half of Liberia's 3.2 million people are refugees or displaced in their own country.

'Hu' could face treason charges

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd could face charges of treason for signing the Maastricht Treaty on closer European union, the Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported here. Rodney Atkinson, a businessman and occasional advisor to Conservative ministers, wants to press charges against the foreign secretary at a court hearing in Hexham, northeast England, Thursday, the paper said. Mr. Atkinson, a virulent critic of the European Community, believes Mr. Hurd and Francis Maude, the former junior treasury minister who co-signed the treaty on the government's behalf, could be charged on seven counts under the 1795 treason act, the 1700 act of settlement, the 1953 Coronation Oath Act and case law that no parliament may bind its successor. Mr. Atkinson, who is assisted in his action by a leading member of the right-wing Freedom Association, argues that Mr. Hurd and Mr. Maude have made the queen a citizen of another state (the E.C.), contrary to the Treason Act, and that the British people have, without their consent, been made citizens of another state which can tax them.

Mobutu 'plans election' for December

PARIS (AP) — President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire plans to call an election for December and says the prospect of losing power after 28 years doesn't scare him, according to an interview published Saturday. Mr. Mobutu has been the target of a vigorous though divided opposition movement for several years as his country's economy collapsed. Western countries have cut off aid, and he has been forced to share power with his political rival, Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Rainey badly hurt in crash

MISANO (AFP) — World motorcycle champion Wayne Rainey was seriously injured in a crash Sunday during an Italian Grand Prix won by his Italian teammate Luca Cadalora. Rainey crashed on the 11th lap and his condition was as serious as the circuit doctor, who had the Californian helicoptered to the nearest specialist hospital, at Cesena, for further examination. Dr. Costa said Rainey had broken two vertebrae in the spill. Rainey, who started on the front row of the grid, crashed out leaving Suzuki's Kevin Schwantz and Cadalora to fight for the spoils with Australia's Michael Doohan. Doohan's Honda charged through the field for second place, but Schwantz was more than happy with third spot as he regained the overall lead with 219 points, just five ahead of Rainey. Cadalora's win was his second of the season following his success at Donington Park, England. Schwantz is now five points clear with two races left.

Ten French soccer fans arrested

PARIS (R) — French police have arrested 10 soccer fans in connection with violence at a Paris stadium last month in which several policemen were injured, court sources said Sunday. The sources said those arrested were aged between 18 and 30 and were supporters of French first division club Paris St Germain. They could face trial for rebellion, conspiracy, attacking police officers, damaging property and theft, said the sources. The violence flared after a match between Paris St Germain and Caen at the Parc Des Princes Stadium in Paris August 28. France is anxious to stamp out soccer violence because it is due to host the 1998 World Cup.

Jordan is tops with Australian youngsters

BRISBANE (AP) — American basketball star Michael Jordan is the most popular sporting hero with Australian youngsters, according to a survey released Sunday. The survey of more than 600 students at high schools across Queensland State found Jordan was more popular than home-grown heroes like rugby league star Allan Langer, Australian cricket captain Allan Border and golfer Greg Norman. Students were given a list of leading sporting personalities and asked to rank them in order of popularity in the survey, conducted by the Sunday Mail newspaper. Chicago Bulls star Jordan polled 1,375 points, ahead of rugby league Stars Langer (1,051), Wally Lewis (798) and Willie Carne (726). Another American basketball player, Shaquille O'Neal, was fifth, with 597.

Karpov, Timman meet for official title

PARIS (AFP) — Russia's Anatoly Karpov and Dutchman Jan Timman meet Monday in the Dutch town of Zwolle for the first game in the "other" world chess championship, the official contest backed by the World Chess Federation (FIDE). The meeting is certain to be overshadowed by the match beginning Tuesday in London between the current world champion Garry Kasparov and Britain's Nigel Short who defeated both Karpov and Timman to earn the right to challenge for the world title. FIDE invited Karpov, 42, and Timman, 41, to compete for the title after it disowned Kasparov and Short for announcing that they would make their own arrangements for the staging of the championship final, in a dispute over how the venue was to be chosen. FIDE, which has organised the world chess championship since 1948, has struck Kasparov and Short from its official listings.

Alfonso gives Real Madrid flying start

PAMPLONA, Spain (R) — Real Madrid striker Alfonso Perez scored twice to help his team to a 4-1 win at Osasuna in a flying start to the Spanish soccer season Saturday. Real Madrid, first division runners-up last season, had won only two of their previous 10 matches against Osasuna in Pamplona. They played a fluid attacking game and did not appear to miss injured Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano. Alfonso scored his first goal in the 44th minute and added his second minutes later to give Real Madrid a 2-0 lead. Emilio Butragueno scored in the 70th minute and Michel Gonzalez hammered in a penalty in the 84th minute to put the visitors 4-0 in front. Osasuna's Yugoslav defender Pedrag Spasic, a former Real Madrid player, gave the home team its only goal two minutes later with a long shot that beat goalkeeper Francisco Buys.

Warhurst transfers to Blackburn

BLACKBURN (AP) — After failing to reach an agreement three weeks ago, English Premier League soccer teams Sheffield Wednesday and Blackburn have worked out a transfer deal for Paul Warhurst. Warhurst, who scored six goals for Wednesday last season, will join Blackburn for 2.75 million pounds (\$1.12 million) pending the results of a medical checkup. He is expected to debut for his new team Saturday. Warhurst was primarily a defender during his first 5½ years in the league, but was called into emergency service on the front line at the end of last season and helped Wednesday to the finals of the League Cup and the Football Association Cup.

U.S. Open

Sampras, Chang charge through

Rain wipes out most of schedule

NEW YORK (AFP) — On a day when rain slowed the tempo of the United States Tennis Open, second-seeded Pete Sampras sped into the fourth round of the men's singles with a straight-set victory over unseeded Frenchman Arnaud Boetsch.

Sampras, whose afternoon match was rescheduled for the night session because of rain delays totalling four and a half hours, took just one and a half hours to beat Boetsch 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

"I served pretty well today, and I returned a little bit better as the match wore on," the Wimbledon champion said.

Seventh-seeded Michael Chang had to work a little harder to come up with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 victory over German Bernd Karbacher.

Karbacher was up a break and had two break points to make it 5-4 in the second but failed to convert, leaving the American relieved.

"It is a very big deal," he said of the match. "I was very fortunate to squeak out of that second set."

Chang's next opponent will be South African Wayne Ferreira, who beat German Marc Goellner 6-4, 6-7 (1/7), 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, while Sampras will meet Sweden's Thomas Enqvist, who upset Andre Agassi in the first round.

Enqvist beat Zimbabwe's Byron Black 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 to reach the round of 16 in his first appearance in the event.

Although cautious about his chances of going all the way, Enqvist was not prepared to write himself off.

"I feel good," he said. "I have good confidence. I am in very good shape. Now you just look at the next match, trying to win every match you play."

Sampras said he thought he knew what to expect from Enqvist.

"I played him twice before and beat him both times, but I think he has made a lot of improvements to his game," Sampras said. "Obviously, I was surprised that he beat Andre. His first serve is really hard. It will just be a matter of staying back and being patient."



Michael Chang

Austria's 12th seeded Thomas Muster, whose match with Patrick McEnroe was disrupted twice by the rain, finally won 6-4, 6-4.

12 ranking is due largely to his success on clay, was the highest-seeded player left in his quarter of the draw after the spate of early upsets claimed Stefan Edberg and Michael Stich.

"Maybe I'm the most unexpected (seed) left," said Muster, who rarely plays hardcourt tournament because they are so damaging to the knee that was injured when he was hit by a car in 1989.

He led 4-2 when the rain first started. Three and a half hours later, after several near-starts, the two players returned to play for 20 minutes.

Then the slow drizzle started again.

They waited another hour and then the weather finally cleared for good.

McEnroe said the interruptions were not really a factor in the match.

"It's difficult for everyone," he said. "I don't think it affected the way the match went. We both came out and played well after the breaks."

Also in Muster's quarter, 14th-seeded Alexander Volkov of Russia beat Amos Mansdorf 2-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-2.

The two other Maleeva Sisters joined their sister Marnela Maleeva-Fragniere in the fourth round with straight set victories.

Tenth-seeded Magdalena Maleeva, at 18 the youngest of the trio, beat American Kimberly Po 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Middle sister Katerina Maleeva, 24, defeated Gigi Fernandez 6-1, 6-1.

Natalia Zvereva of Belarus upset 16th-seeded Zina Garrison Jackson of the United States 6-4, 6-3 and in the next round meets 20-year-old Argentinian Maria Jose Gaidano.

Gaidano, the "lucky-loser" who replaced ailing Mary Joe Fernandez in the draw, advanced with a 2-6, 6-2, 6-3 victory over Australian Jenny Byrne.

The rain delays prevented completion of the women's third round.

Second-seed Arantxa Sanchez and number three Martina Navratilova had their matches postponed, as did 12th seed Helena Sukova and number 14 Nathalie Tauziat.

China's National Games to boost Olympic bid

BEIJING — A celebration of the Olympic spirit and patriotism marked the opening ceremony of China's Seventh National Games Saturday evening, seen by many as a last chance to boost Beijing's bid to host the 2000 Olympics.

"Five stars call for five rings," sang two Chinese pop stars, Wei

Wei and Liu Huan at the end of the one-hour ceremony in the capital's Workers' Stadium.

For those who did not immediately make the connection, the thousands of dancers in the stadium formed themselves into the shape of China's red flag with five stars which they then trans-

formed into the Olympic banner with its five rings.

And just in case that was too subtle, a multicolored laser show then got under way with a massive red neon sign spelling out the year 2000 as its centrepiece.

Beijing is one of five cities bidding to host the turn-of-the-century games, with the site to be chosen by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Monte Carlo September 23.

On the official stand were 11 IOC delegates who had been welcomed prior to the ceremony by Communist Party chief and Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

The themes of brotherhood and Olympic spirit did not prevent, however, the organisers of the national games from operating double standards when it came to ticket sales.

Tickets for the opening ceremony were available to Chinese at 100,200 or 300 renminbi, while foreigners were expected to pay 300 yuan in foreign exchange certificates which have an actual value of 450 renminbi.

Some observers wondered whether a similar discrepancy would be enforced should Beijing win the race to host the 2000 Games.

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THE AMERICAN WOMEN OF AMMAN will hold their September monthly general meeting on September 6th at the Marriott Hotel from 10 am - Noon

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1993 Women's Basketball Championship begins today

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After a 15-month break, women's basketball teams return to competition Monday in the Kingdom's 1993 Women's Basketball Championship, organised by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF).

This year too, only four teams will be competing in the two-week long tournament. They will be titleholders, Al Orthodoxi, second-placed Al Ahli, Al Jazireh, and newcomers Abu Nusair. Homentmen, who with the Kingdom's top two teams backed the JBF's move to reinstate the game in 1989, have opted not to take part in this year's competition because of the absence of many of their players.

The competition, now held for the 4th straight year, is the only yearly activity the JBF provides for the country's women's teams. This year's competition was scheduled to take place in April. However, it was postponed four times before the JBF finally announced that it would begin Sept. 6.

Despite the players' and coaches' disapproval of the usually crammed schedule and two-round championship which burdens players and does not provide enough matches in the once-a-year competition, the JBF seems to have not taken this into consideration — and to the players' discontent — the women's competition will be over before anyone notices that it actually took place.

The JBF has repeatedly postponed the regrouping of the women's national teams since the 1992 championship ended last May. Although the team was called for a meeting to agree upon a training schedule in January, the team was never regrouped again.

Al Orthodoxi had won the 1992 championship after easily defeating all-time rivals Al Ahli 73-50 and 62-30. Al Ahli finished second after two final minute victories of 43-41 and 52-49 over Homentmen. Al Jazireh clinched third place from Homentmen after defeating them 48-30.

This season Al Orthodoxi seem capable of retaining their title, thanks to an abundance of experienced players. Al Ahli and Al Jazireh will seek to capture second place, while Abu Nusair seem destined to have a tough time, the first time around.

Abu Nusair take on Al Orthodoxi and Al Ahli clash with Al Jazireh in the championship's opening matches Monday.

SCHEDULE OF MATCHES

FIRST ROUND

Monday Sept. 6	Orthodoxi vs. Abu Nusair	(5 p.m. — Orthodoxi Court)
	Al Ahli vs. Jazireh	(6 p.m. — Ahli Court)
Tuesday Sept. 14	Orthodoxi vs. Jazireh	(6 p.m. — Orthodoxi Court)
	Abu Nusair vs. Ahli	(5 p.m. — Ahli Court)
Friday Sept. 17	Orthodoxi vs. Ahli	(6:30 p.m. — Ahli Court)
	Jazireh vs. Abu Nusair	(5 p.m. — Ahli Court)

SECOND ROUND

Sun. Sept. 19	Jazireh vs. Ahli	(6:30 p.m. — JSBF Court)
	Abu Nusair vs. Orthodoxi	(5 p.m. — Orthodoxi Court)
Tue. Sept. 21	Al Ahli vs. Abu Nusair	(5 p.m. — Orthodoxi Court)
	Jazireh vs. Orthodoxi	(6:30 p.m. — JSBF Court)
Thurs. Sept. 23	Abu Nusair vs. Jazireh	(6:30 p.m. — JSBF Court)
	Al Ahli vs. Orthodoxi	(6:30 p.m. — Orthodoxi Court)

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<p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD 1 MY GIRL CONCORD 2 LAST ACTION HERO</p> <p>SHOWS: 12:30, 3:15, 6, 8:15, 10:15</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>Adel Imari in: Wad Sayyed Al Shaghal play (Arabic)</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>Robert Redford Demi Moore — in INDECENT PROPOSAL</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p>presents a play entitled: Al ilm Nuron</p> <p>A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalalaj, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali In addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day</p>	<p>ANLAN THEATRE</p> <p>Returns to you Thursday Aug. 26 in the play: Arab Summit Conference</p>
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Libya and Britain said to agree on Lockerbie trial

EDINBURGH (Agencies) — Britain and Libya have signed a deal to bring two men accused of blowing up a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie in 1988 to trial in Scotland, the Sunday Post newspaper said Sunday.

The Scottish weekly said top Libyan legal expert Ibrahim Legwell visited Scotland secretly to meet the lawyers who would defend the accused, Abdel Baset Ali Mohammed Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah.

"Every last detail of the plan to bring the men here has now been signed by the two governments," the Sunday Post said.

It said Mr. Legwell's visit three weeks ago was the culmination of 12 months of the secret negotiations.

The British Foreign Office would not confirm that a deal had been signed but a spokesman said: "We have given the Libyans a series of detailed assurances about a fair trial in Scotland and the treatment of the two men after they have been surrendered."

Britain and the United States hold the two men solely responsible for planting a bomb in December 1988 that killed all 259 people aboard Pan American World Airways flight 103 from London to New York and 11 people in the small Scottish town.

The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Libya over its refusal to hand the men over. Britain, France and the United States have set Oct. 1 as the deadline for tough new measures if they are not surrendered.

The newspaper said Libya set strict terms for allowing the men to stand trial in Scotland. These included where they would be held, the food they would be

given and facilities for religious worship while in custody.

Britain agreed the two accused would arrive as free men and would not be arrested until they entered the terminal building at a Scottish airport, the Sunday Post said.

Recent Scottish media reports increased speculation that the two men will arrive in Scotland before the Oct. 1 deadline.

The Scotsman daily newspaper said two weeks ago that Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi had been given secret guarantees the men would not be handed over to America whatever the outcome of trial in Scotland.

The Scotsman said top Scottish advocate Lord Macaulay of Bragar met representatives of the two men secretly in Brussels last month. Lord Macaulay, 59, a leading defence lawyer and a spokesman on Scottish legal affairs for the opposition Labour Party, admits he went to Brussels but refuses to reveal the purpose of the visit.

The Foreign Office would only say it was aware of the nature of Lord Macaulay's visit.

Libya reports sanctions effect

An engine caught fire on a Libyan airliner leaving Benghazi and forced an emergency landing 12 minutes after takeoff, Libya's news agency reported Saturday.

JANA, the official agency monitored in Cairo, reported no injuries among more than 150 passengers and undetermined number of crew.

The Libyan Arab Airlines Boeing 727 was flight 1103, the same Benghazi-to-Tripoli service

on which a 727 crashed last December with a loss of 157 lives. JANA said the emergency landing occurred Wednesday. The plane took off at 2:03 p.m. but turned back "when the aircraft commander was informed of a failure in engine number two" and landed at Benghazi at 2:15. It said the engine was destroyed by the fire.

The agency blamed the incident on the 16-month-old U.N. embargo denying Libya among other things aircraft spare parts.

Quoting "a source" at Libyan Arab Airlines, JANA said "the coercive measures" against Libya "prevented the supply of the necessary spare parts needed for the maintenance of aircraft and (to) guarantee aviation safety."

It said: "The measures were the cause for what the Libyan aircraft suffered and almost led to a new catastrophe."

Algerian paper assails Qadhafi

A newspaper Sunday accused Col. Qadhafi of supporting anti-government violence in Algeria and urged the authorities to act against Tripoli.

In a rare attack on a leader of a neighbouring country, Al Watan said: "Besides his interference in Algeria's internal affairs, the Libyan leader has unmasked himself and confirmed he is one of the principal supporters of terrorism."

The newspaper, generally well informed on security matters, said Col. Qadhafi last week announced Libya had the "capacity to cooperate" with Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), its jailed President Abassi Madani and deputy Ali Belhadi.

Reporters said they saw the bodies of seven Nigerians — stripped of their uniforms — lying in three locations several miles apart.

Local residents told reporters the Nigerians were challenged by pro-Aideed gunmen as the U.N. soldiers drove before dawn in two vehicles to Checkpoint pasta, manned by Italian troops, following reports of shooting in the area.

After trying to talk with the angry Somalis, the Nigerians fired in the air — drawing intense gunfire from two directions, the residents said.

"The elders told the Nigerian commander to go away because 'we don't want to fight you.' But the Nigerians opened fire and the angry crowd reacted," one elder



Somalis stand in front of the body of one of Nigerian soldiers killed in one of two ambushes against peacekeeping forces in Mogadishu (AFP photo)

Seven Nigerian soldiers killed in Mogadishu attack

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Seven Nigerian U.N. troops were killed by Somali gunmen in north Mogadishu early Sunday and another two, apparently badly wounded, were taken prisoner, residents said.

Somali sources said at least 15 Somalis, including some women and children, were killed in fighting between the Nigerian patrol and gunmen who chanted slogans supporting fugitive warlord Mohammad Farah Aideed.

There was no immediate comment from U.N. sources on the incident, which appeared to be the most serious attack on U.N. peacekeepers since 23 Pakistanis were killed in June by gunmen loyal to General Aideed.

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"The elders told the Nigerian commander to go away because 'we don't want to fight you.' But the Nigerians opened fire and the angry crowd reacted," one elder

told Reuters. Witnesses said the Nigerians tried to withdraw but their path was blocked by more Somalis and they succeeded in driving only about a kilometre before the entire party was wiped out.

Witnesses said Italian troops at Checkpoint Pasta had tried to save the Nigerians by urging local elders to cool down the gunmen, but the crowd ignored them and lit barricades of tyres to block U.N. reinforcements.

Several hours later, Italian commander General Bruno Loi reached the scene in a bid to recover the soldiers' bodies, several Pakistani tanks trying to get to the spot failed to break through the barricades.

It took Gen. Loi half an hour of intense negotiation before the Italian troops were allowed to remove the bodies.

The incident brought to 46 the number of U.N. peacekeepers killed in Somalia this year.

Sunday's attack followed a period of mounting tension in Mogadishu after a series of round-ups by heavily armed U.S. troops searching for arms caches in the city.

The situation in the area of the clash remained tense. Crowds shouted and gestured angrily at U.N. troops and journalists.

On Saturday, gunmen built makeshift barricades along the main street in south Mogadishu as an act of defiance. One barrier was only 100 metres from a Pakistani checkpoint.

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Sarajevo faces fuel crisis amid fighting

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo may run out of fuel within days as heavy clashes between Croat and Muslim troops block supply routes into the city, U.N. officials said Sunday.

The battles raging between former allies, the Bosnian Croat and Muslim-led government troops, in Gornji Vakuf have cut off humanitarian aid convoys travelling from the Croatian port of Split into Sarajevo.

"By the end of the coming week, the fuel situation in Sarajevo will be quite severe," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Ray Wilkinson told a news briefing in Sarajevo.

"UNHCR already has no fuel reserves on hand."

Sarajevo suffers continual power cuts because of fuel shortages and residents have little left to burn for warmth in the approaching winter because all the city's trees were felled last year.

A convoy carrying fuel for Sarajevo remained stalled in western Bosnia-Herzegovina because of Croat-Muslim fighting.

U.N. officials said it was just chance that other convoys travelling through Muslim-Croat battle zones made it to other destinations Saturday.

"The system loosened up for (only) one day," said Lieutenant Colonel Bill Aikman, a U.N. spokesman. He said the 20 convoys delivered more than 1,000 tonnes of food and other relief to central and eastern Bosnia.

Fighting between Muslims and Croats has centred recently around the southwestern city of Mostar, divided between the two rival factions. Col. Aikman said occasional artillery, mortar and sniper fire shook the city Saturday. Bosnian radio reported full-scale fighting for Mostar on Sunday, but there was no U.N. confirmation.

Despite the tensions, Col. Aikman was hopeful that about 50 injured in Muslim-held eastern Mostar could be flown out later Sunday as part of a mutual evacuation deal.

Come Croats have already been taken out through Muslim lines surrounding the central town of Nova Bila as part of the agreement. Bosnian Croats spoke of fierce Muslim attacks on their positions near Nova Bila on Sunday, but there was no independent corroboration.

The U.S. administration on Thursday threatened Croats and Serbs with NATO air strikes if they resumed offensives against key cities, including Mostar.

Croats at first fought alongside government forces to put down a rebellion by Serbs over Bosnia's independence from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

The alliance collapsed in fighting over land in central Bosnia and around Mostar. Croats want Mostar to be the capital of a future Bosnian Croat state if a plan to partition the country into three ethnic states goes through.

Talks on such a division collapsed last week in Geneva over territorial issues, provoking fears of more intense fighting in Bosnia. But Bosnia's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic, said Saturday he expected the Geneva talks to resume in two weeks. He flew Sunday to New York, where he will meet the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday.

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Thatcher's former ministers reveal her secret weapon

LONDON (AFP) — Former ministers under ex-premier Margaret Thatcher have revealed her secret weapon used to quell opposition to her views during cabinet discussions — the contents of her handbag.

"The biggest mystery of all were the despatched handbag briefings," said former Home Secretary Kenneth Baker in a BBC radio programme called Maggie's Minister, which is to air next week. "If she felt things were not going her way, one of her techniques to regain control in the cabinet was to open her handbag and produce a briefing," he said. "This led to a complex guessing game...no one knew where it came from and you were totally thrown."

Chris Patten, a former environment minister and now governor of Hong Kong said: "She would open her handbag and bring out a sheet of paper heavily underlined in green ink." "The art of being a successful cabinet minister was to have worked out in advance how you shot down the advice that was in her handbag and if you did it well enough the handbag was not opened," said Lord Tebbit, once minister of employment and Conservative Party chairman.

Oscar-winning actor in fatal car crash

WENATCHEE, Washington (AFP) — Oscar winning actor F. Murray Abraham was involved in a car crash near here in which a man was killed, Washington state police said. Abraham's car collided with one driven by Guy Ketzenberg, 28, who died at the scene, said police. Police said they could not say who was at fault but that Ketzenberg was travelling on a state highway which has a stop sign where it intersects with a federal highway.

The crash occurred at that intersection. Abraham, who lives in New York City, suffered a fractured wrist and cuts. He won an Oscar for his portrayal of Mozart's rival in the 1984 movie Amadeus.

Italian wins Busoni Piano Competition

DOLZANO, Italy (AP) — Italian Roberto Cominati has won the annual Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition, organisers said. Cominati, who won after playing Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 3, Opus 30, competed with more than 100 pianists. The 29-year-old Cominati, who received 15 million lire (\$9,300) in prize money, is only the third Italian ever to win the country's most prestigious piano competition. Ukrainian Vitaly Sanchesku, 20, took second place and received nine million lire (\$5,600). In third place was Olivier Cazal, 31, of France, who won 7 million lire (\$4,300). Italy had two other pianists finishing in the top six of the 27 semi finalists.

Missing man found in home freezer

MANITOWOC, Wis (AP) — A man's body was found in a freezer at his home a week after he vanished. Donald Nooker, 61, was last seen on Aug. 27 heading for work, said Police Capt. Randy Ammerman. Nooker's wife, Mildred, said she discovered the body Friday when she went to get some frozen food. Capt. Ammerman said. Investigators were waiting for results of an autopsy before making guesses on whether Mr. Nooker fell into the freezer or his body was placed there, Capt. Ammerman said.

Joseph Kennedy's wife to fight annulment

BOSTON (AP) — Sheila Rauch Kennedy has brought new attention to a sensitive subject for the Roman Catholic Church by saying she'll fight an annulment petition by her divorced husband, Congressman Joseph Kennedy II. The church never recognises legal divorces, but it grants annulments — more often than in the past — for a variety of reasons. Without an annulment, Catholics cannot remarry or remain in good standing in the church, which teaches that marriage means forever. Mrs. Sheila Kennedy said her 12-year marriage to the congressman does not fit the church's requirement for annulment: That a "sacramental bond" never existed. "If our marriage were deemed never to have existed in the eyes of the church, then our children, like others of annulled marriages, would have been neither conceived in nor born to a sanctified union," she wrote in a letter to Time magazine.

China assails U.S. over ship affair, demands damages

PEKING (Agencies) — China accused the United States Sunday of "hegemonism" and power politics in the dispute over a Chinese freighter Washington claimed was carrying chemical weapons material.

The Foreign Ministry said in a lengthy statement carried by the official Xinhua news agency that the inspection of the Yinhe begun Aug. 28 was complete, and that no evidence was found of the chemicals the United States said were bound for Iran.

The statement said the United States and Saudi Arabia, which was conducting the inspection at its port in Dammam, have jointly signed a report on the search.

It demanded a public apology and millions of dollars in damages from Washington.

China also ridiculed U.S. intelligence reports on the ship and its cargo as no more than rumour and fabrication.

Washington described the forced search as "unfortunate" and declined to pay damages, indicating that similar searches would be carried out in future.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said the search was in line with President Bill Clinton's policy of halting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

"The inconvenience to the Yinhe and to the governments of Saudi Arabia and China are unfortunate," he said, stopping

short of an apology.

Washington had charged that the freighter was carrying thiodiglycol and thionyl chloride destined for Iran. China had said 24 containers bound for Iran contained stationery, metals and machine parts.

"If such behaviour of a self-styled 'world cop' is to be condoned, can there still be justice, sovereign equality and normal state-to-state relations in this world," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry condemned the United States for "hegemonism and power politics pure and simple."

The United States acted "in an utterly indiscreet and irresponsible manner," the statement said.

The joint inspection in the port of Dammam was conducted between Aug. 26 and Sept. 4 on the ship, which left the northern Chinese port of Tianjin on July 15 bound for Dubai.

The Foreign Ministry said the United States had acted without even "the basic facts."

"The U.S. has so often wilfully brought pressure to bear on other countries on the grounds of its 'so-called intelligence' which is no more than hearsay or self-invented stories," the statement added.

China estimated losses caused by Washington at some \$12.9 million to the ship owners, China

Ocean Shipping Co.

Another State Department spokesman, Martin Judge, rejected Peking's claims for damages, saying the inspection was done "with the full consent of China."

The ministry statement said the United States had "violated China's sovereignty and the freedom of Chinese ships to sail in international waters."

"The United States should commit itself in explicit terms to strict compliance with international law and norms governing international relations in the future handling of its relations with other states and guarantee against the recurrence of similar incidents," it said.

But Mr. McCurry said there was "credible evidence" for the U.S. action, adding that Washington would continue demanding similar inspections "when we receive information concerning possible exports to weapons programmes of concern."

The Chinese statement recalled that China was a signatory to the chemical weapons convention, which has yet to take effect.

"The Chinese government will, as always, strictly observe its international obligations and make its contribution to safeguarding international peace and security and promoting normal economic and trade exchanges among countries," it said.

Prime Minister Redha Malek, a member of the five-man presidency, brought new faces to the energy and foreign portfolios at the weekend but kept eight ministers in their former jobs.

Mr. Malek's appointment of Benachrouh broke with his two predecessors who kept control of economic affairs.

Mr. Benachrouh has strongly

Soldier, reformist in Algerian cabinet

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria drafted a tough soldier and a taboo-breaking economist into a new government, signalling a coordinated drive against Muslim militants and a new push to rescue the battered economy.

Diplomats and commentators see the new interior minister, Salim Sadi, former chief of Algeria's third military region, and Economy Minister Mourad Benachrouh, an ex-World Bank official, as policy standard-bearers of the 25-man government.

Prime Minister Redha Malek, a member of the five-man presidency, brought new faces to the energy and foreign portfolios at the weekend but kept eight ministers in their former jobs.

Mr. Malek's appointment of Benachrouh broke with his two predecessors who kept control of economic affairs.

Mr. Benachrouh has strongly

supported rescheduling some of the Algeria's estimated \$25 billion foreign debt and speeding up privatisation of an economy badly misfiring after nearly 30 years of socialist centralised management.

"Nominating a minister with good links with international institutions signals possible serious negotiations," a Western diplomat said, referring to Mr. Benachrouh's World Bank ties.

"Does it mean rescheduling is going to be government policy? It certainly nudges us in that direction."

Officials say the failure of the economy fuels discontent, particularly among the 17 million aged under 30 of the country's 26 million people, providing a fertile breeding ground for Islamic extremism.

Debt-repayments of around \$9 billion a year or over 70 per cent of foreign income from oil and

gas exports, the only significant exports, have ravaged the economy.

More than 20 per cent of the workforce is unemployed, much industry, lacking spare parts and raw materials, operates at half capacity, and there is a chronic housing shortage.

"Rescheduling becomes urgent, of little